

**Business social responsibility of small and micro enterprises**

**A case study of a Brazilian micro supermarket**

Research dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of

**MSc in International Business Management**

Griffith College Dublin

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**26<sup>th</sup> of August of 2020**

## **Candidate Declaration**

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I certify that the dissertation entitled: Business social responsibility of small and micro enterprises. A case study of a Brazilian micro supermarket

submitted for the degree of **MSc in International Business Management** is the result of my own work and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgment is given.

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## **Dedication and Acknowledgements**

First, I want to thank God for giving me enough resilience and patience to be able to complete this challenge.

I also would like to acknowledge the support of my family, friends, teachers and supervisor.

I would like to thank all the participants for their valuable time and insights which were fundamental to this study.

Thank you all. I would not be able to do it without your support.

## **Abstract**

### **Business social responsibility of small and micro enterprises: A case study of a Brazilian micro supermarket**

*Raquel Silva Campos*

This dissertation investigates if a micro enterprise in the northeast of Brazil has business social responsibility actions towards its local community, the motivation for the support provided (if any) and if the perception of business success can be linked to being socially responsible.

The focus is on a case study of a micro supermarket in the northeast of Brazil. The research has followed an interpretivist philosophy and employs a qualitative methodology. The researcher has chosen non-probability sampling with a sample size of nine interviews.

The primary data was collected from semi-structured online interviews, focused on the owner of the company in study, three employees and five members of the community where the company is located.

It was demonstrated in this study that the idea of business social responsibility can be subjective and that the size of the company, or the perception of size, can influence what people expect from it. The research has shown that financial measurements are used for small and micro enterprises, but that non-financial measurements were the most presented in this study as a way to measure the success of Mercantil Nazareno.

In conclusion, the findings from this study have shown that the majority of the members of the community do not recognise the support provided by the business as being socially responsible. The main motivation to support the community was presented as enlightened self-interest. The findings of this research have partially reaffirmed other studies about the characteristics of owner, business and community as influencers of community support. Finally, the relationship between business social responsibility practices and the perception of business success has been found as inconclusive.

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## List of Acronyms

ACRONYMS	FULL FORM
SME.....	SMALL AND MICRO ENTERPRISES
CSR.....	CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
BSR .....	BUSINESS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
ESI .....	ENLIGHTENED SELF-INTEREST
PME .....	PEQUENAS E MICROEMPRESAS (SME)
LC .....	LOCAL COMMUNITY

# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Overview**

This study examined the business social responsibility (BSR) of small and micro enterprises in Latin America, and in particular, in the northeast of Brazil, while also investigating what influences and motivates the owners of small and micro businesses to support their local communities. This research was structured using a case study of a micro supermarket in Barra Nova, a district of Redenção, a small community in the northeast of Brazil. The research was conducted by using semi-structured interviews, to gather new empirical data.

It is the intent of this study to critically analyse literature, qualitative data and findings from academic studies and reports to present a practical conclusion that may assist small and micro businesses to understand the impact that a relationship with the local community may cause to the perception of the success of the business itself.

This study shall utilise academic peer reviewed publications, journals, books and management web pages as the foundation for the critical analyses of the primary qualitative data collected.

The relevant business discipline for this research is the responsible business management (RBM). The researcher used the theory provided by this discipline to develop the literature review.

## **1.2 Research Purpose**

The purpose of this dissertation is to make a contemporary contribution to the knowledge and research already conducted regarding business social responsibility of small and micro enterprises (SME) in Latin America, and more specifically, in Brazil.

By investigating the objectives of this research, the researcher will be able to identify the impact, if any, that the relationship between SMEs and local communities have on the perception of business success and if the investment of time and resources by the



company in this relationship can be justified by financial and non-financial returns (if any) from this relationship.

Initially, the author's intention was to study a SME owned by a family member because the access to information would be simpler, and the management would potentially be more willing to talk openly during the interviews. However, when researching the bias generated by studying a business which the author herself has a personal connection to, the researcher decided to take another route.

To guarantee that the minimum bias possible would happen during the data collection, the researcher has decided to study a totally independent company, which will allow for an impartial view when analysing the primary data.

With this in mind, this dissertation will generate knowledge about small and micro business social responsibility, only focusing in the northeast of Brazil. This seemed to be the appropriate research topic because SME represent 99% of Brazilian business and generate 52% of employment in Brazil (Sebrae, 2019), and the literature suggests that there is a need to explore how businesses and members of the community understand and promote business social responsibility.

It is the hope of this author that the findings will be considered by small and micro businesses owners who may need to evaluate or re-evaluate their current relationship with their local communities.

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

The significance of this research is how the findings may impact the relationship between owners of small and micro businesses and the local communities. The researcher intends to investigate if the perception of success of small and micro businesses has a direct relationship to the support provided to and by the local community, as well as what motivates and influences the support.

This study has been motivated by a shortage in research about small and micro businesses and their social responsibility towards the local communities, in Latin America and more specifically, in Brazil (Visser, 2008).

This research will also contribute to the knowledge about the relationship between business social responsibility and business success, which has been presented as inconclusive by the literature available (Orlitzky et al., 2003; Aupperle et al., 1985; McGuire et al., 1988).

It is hoped that this study will highlight the importance for small and micro businesses to consider a relationship with the local communities as a key strategic objective to create or improve their competitive advantage.

#### **1.4 Research Objective**

Four research objectives were developed to guide this study.

##### **1.4.1 First objective**

To investigate if Mercantil Nazareno (Nazareno's supermarket), a Brazilian SME, supports its local community with business social responsibility actions

The author intends to assess if Mercantil Nazareno invests its time and resources to help and support its local community. By using a critical case study strategy, the researcher aims to understand deeply the relationship between the SME and the local community (if any).

##### **1.4.2 Second objective**

To identify what motivates Mercantil Nazareno (Nazareno's supermarket) to support its local community with business social responsibility actions

First, the author shall investigate if the enlightened self-interest can be considered as a motivation behind a possible relationship between local community and SME. Next, this study will investigate if moral obligation can be considered as a motivation behind a possible relationship between local community and SME. Finally, the author shall investigate if personal rewards can be considered as a motivation behind a possible relationship between local community and SME.

#### 1.4.3 Third Objective

To explore what factors can influence the level of community involvement, with regard to business social responsibility actions, of Mercantil Nazareno (Nazareno's supermarket).

The researcher aims to understand if the business owner's personal characteristics can influence the level of community support provided (if any). Also, the author shall investigate if the business' characteristics and the characteristics of the community can influence the level of support received, perceived and provided (if any).

#### 1.4.4 Fourth objective

To assess if the perceived business success of Mercantil Nazareno (Nazareno's supermarket) can be associated with its socially responsible practices (if any).

First, the author intends to understand what is considered as business success to the participants of the study. Literature has shown that financial and non-financial measurements might be applied when considering the business success of SMEs. Finally, the researcher aims to assess if this success can be associated with the socially responsible actions of the business (if any).

### 1.5 Structure of the Study

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first chapter comprises the introduction, research purpose, research objectives and significance of this study. The second chapter sets out the literature review, focusing on addressing the research objectives, and a conceptual framework developed exclusively to this research.

The third chapter assesses the research methodology and strategy selected for this dissertation, followed by a complete explanation of this decision process. The fourth chapter is composed by the findings from the qualitative data generated from the primary research. This data will be analysed, presented and discussed in this section.

The fifth and last chapter of this dissertation sets out the conclusion and recommendations of this study. It also presents the limitations faced by the researcher while completing the

study, as well as suggestions for future studies that would bring more insights to the literature of business social responsibility of small and micro businesses in the northeast of Brazil.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Overview**

It is the objective of this literature review to identify and substantiate the central topics of this study through the critical review of academic literature and theories. It is the author's purpose to examine comparative and contrasting studies about the business social responsibility of small and micro businesses in the Northeast of Brazil.

This chapter will present a critical analysis of the available literature related to the research objectives previously pointed. The following sections will form the structure of this literature review:

- Business Social Responsibility of small and micro enterprises (SMEs)
- SMEs and the support to the local community
- Perceived success of an SME

### **2.2 Business social responsibility of small and micro enterprises**

The literature about corporate social responsibility (CSR) is comprised by a vast range of definitions that have different meanings to different people. Blowfield and Frynas (2005) argue that this lack in a reliable definition limits the value of CSR “as an analytical tool”. Devinney (2009) adds to this argument by saying that this plasticity in the definitions makes it possible for businesses to adjust their actions in a way that it is difficult to verify if they are being “socially, ethically, or politically” responsible.

Another critique about CSR is presented by Doane (2005), who argues that business and society will not be on the same side of the scale. Businesses will do as much as possible to make a profit, even if it is on the cost of social benefits. Thus, profits are most likely to triumph over the social needs or the principles of the members of the company (Doane 2005, p. 25). Other authors also argue that firms “are not naturally socially responsible” and it is naïve to believe that the “doing well by doing good” CSR mantra is always true (Devinney, 2009, p. 46).

Corporate social responsibility is defined by the Brazilian Ethos Company and Social Responsibility Institute (Ethos Institute, 2019) as “the ethical relationship between the company, shareholders and stakeholders, and the establishment of business goals

compatible with them”, allowing for differences within the groups and supporting the development of the parties involved.

In Latin America, CSR is deeply associated with the values of the owner/manager and their family (Gupta *et al.*, 2008). Also, Latin American owners retain strong religious beliefs, which may further motivate the support of the needy (Cruz, 2020).

Other authors have argued that the literature concerning Latin America and the social responsibility provided by small and micro businesses is problematic to find (Gutierrez and Jones, 2004) because said businesses do not formally report those activities.

Another point highlighted by the literature about CSR in Latin America discusses the lack of trust that the community has towards the private sector. This communication issue makes it difficult for businesses to understand and support the community in the best way possible (Gutierrez and Jones, 2007).

In short, CSR in developing countries is mostly used to tackle certain problems that can be present in society, such as unemployment, hunger, poverty and so on (Puppim de Oliveira, 2006; Schmidheiny, 2006). CSR can be much more than just ‘giving fish to the hungry’. If done correctly, it teaches people how to fish. Ideally, CSR will help the business by assisting the community around it (Ghosh, 2018).

Porter and Kramer (2002) also stress that by supporting the community, companies have the opportunity to develop competitive advantages, such as by increasing the positive image of the company or by having qualified and loyal employees that will give their best to support the business. In other words, a business that shows empathy by taking care of their local communities earn the trust and respect of their stakeholders (Singer *et al.*, 2006).

Monetary donations are commonplace among large companies when being socially responsible. Small and micro businesses (SME) have limited resources when compared to their counterparts (Freytag and Thurik, 2007). Small and micro businesses, most of the time, do not have spare money to donate. In this case, they can start projects that will generate a long term impact on the community, which benefits both society and business (Ghosh, 2018). Those projects can be training or teaching depending on the type of industry the small and micro enterprises (SME) is part of.

Besides the financial differences, SMEs also differ from large companies regarding the relationship between owner and management. The owner and the manager are the same people in the SME. Thus, a common problem that is found in large enterprises - the agent problem, where the owner and managers have different interests - does not happen in SMEs (Quinn, 1997; Spence and Rutherford, 2001; Jasra *et al.*, 2011).

Stakeholder relationships for an SME are more informal, based on intuitive (heuristics) and personal relationships, while large organisations keep a formal and strategic connection with their stakeholders (Jenkins, 2004). For small and micro businesses in small towns, competitors and suppliers can also play the role of customers. It is not rare to see employees, customers and competitors of small businesses having personal relationships with each other.

Nevertheless, the constraints and financial limitations of SMEs do not prevent them from being socially responsible. However, the literature argues that such practices are not easily recognisable because they might differ from the CSR practices that large companies usually do. Additionally, SMEs frequently do not have appropriate nomenclature for the support they provide, making it even more challenging to identify (Spence, 2000; Southwell, 2004; Lahdesmaki, 2005).

Therefore, the theory of social responsibility within developed and large corporations are not suitable for SME from developing countries (Wilson, 1980; Vyakarnam *et al.*, 1997; Spence, 2000, 2004; Jenkins, 2004; Moore and Spence, 2006).

Moving forward, this research is going to focus on the social responsibility of small and micro enterprises. The use of the term corporate social responsibility does not seem to be coherent since the “corporate” in it pertains to larger businesses. In 2010, the International Organization for Standardization removed the word “corporate” so that social responsibility applies to all sizes of business (Fonseca and Ferro, 2016). Thus, this study will use a more holistic term, business social responsibility (BSR) (Besser, 2012; Fonseca and Ferro, 2016).

### 2.2.1 Business social responsibility of small local retailers

There is quite a vast literature about large retailers' social responsibility (Jones *et al.*, 2005; Goworek *et al.*, 2012; Tofighi and Bodur, 2015; Schramm-Klein *et al.*, 2015; Fuentes and Fredriksson, 2016). Yet, not enough research has been done about small local retailers in Latin America, more specifically, in the northeast of Brazil (Jamali *et al.*, 2009).

As we have been presenting in this literature review, large and small companies are very different from each other. It is the same when we talk about retailers. Large retailers' literature should not be applied to small retailers, the same way that large corporations' literature should not be applied to small and micro businesses (Kim *et al.*, 2014).

The literature about business responsibility argues that SMEs are not as visible as large companies and that the society would not demand as much ethical and/or responsible practices from SME as they would demand from their counterparts. However, this assumption is not true for local small retailers. Owner/managers of local retailers are greatly visible to their stakeholders. This characteristic increases the level of pressure that owner/managers of SMEs experience. This unexpected variable might influence the drivers for socially responsible practices of small local retailers (Lähdesmäki and Suutari, 2012) in Latin America, and more specifically, in the Northeast of Brazil.

Small and micro retailers depend on their communities. Likewise, small businesses are deeply related to their local communities as well (Spence *et al.*, 2003; Tencati *et al.*, 2004; Perrini, 2006). It is within the local communities that local retailers sell their products, hire their employees, get financial support and so on (Razalan *et al.*, 2017). This deep connection to the local community can be seen as a competitive advantage to small local businesses (Spence 2000; 2004). Also, it might be a motivation towards socially responsible practices (Lucia-Palacios *et al.*, 2016).

Such as any other SME, small local retailers have limited resources. Therefore, their socially responsible practices will also be limited. Remarkably, small local retailers find ways to support the community by being creative in their actions (Razalan *et al.*, 2017). Similarly, in the literature about SMEs, small local retailers' social responsibility practices are motivated by the owner's characteristics, the connection between the



business and the local community, and so on. Razalan *et al.* (2017) argue that the connection between small retailers and the community is the main driver for socially responsible practices.

Also, since local retail is very visible in the community, the maintenance of a good reputation can be described as a driver for socially responsible practices. Thus, the enlightened self-interest is also a motivator towards being socially responsible (Razalan *et al.*, 2017).

Finally, Card (2005) argued that local retailers might be socially responsible because they consider it the “right thing to do”. Thus, moral obligation is also a driver for BSR of small local retailers.

## **2.3 Small and micro enterprises and the support to local communities**

To better analyse the relationship between SME and the local community (LC), this section will focus on the drivers/motivations for socially responsible practices of an SME towards their LC.

Jenkins (2006) argue that SME contributions to their local communities might be different from those of large companies, as well as what motivates their respective business owner/managers.

### **2.3.1 Motivation to support the local community**

Theories about motivation suggest that the motivation of the business owner will affect how they behave. In other words, motivation influences the “choice” of behaviour, the duration of the behaviour and the “level of effort” applied at this behaviour (Kanfer, 1991).

Within business social responsibility, enlightened self-interest (ESI) is one of the most popular explanations given for why small businesses support or are motivated to support their local communities (Besser and Miller, 2004).

For this dissertation, ESI is defined as support businesses provide to their local communities being motivated by the betterment of the business itself (Besser and Miller, 2004; Kilkenny *et al.*, 1999). In other words, by helping the community which the business is part of, the overall results will also help the business, by having better-qualified employees, safer community, loyal customers and so on (Arlow and Cannon, 1982; Aram, 1989).

It is shown by the literature that the positive results associated with socially responsible activities might be difficult to measure monetarily in the short run, however financial benefits might be possible to be observed in the long run (Keim, 1978; Galaskiewicz, 1985a) since there is a possibility of the increase in the number of potential customers willing to purchase from the business (Besser, 1998).

Besser and Miller (2004) also suggested that businesses depend on strong communities to survive and that communities depend on strong businesses to prosper. Besides enlightened self-interest, moral obligation and personal rewards can also be found in the literature as motivating factors in community support. Moral obligation is defined as carrying out an act that the owner believes is morally expected, even if it does not bring any financial benefits to the business. Personal rewards are defined as the support provided by the business that will give the owner a feeling of personal achievement (Besser, 2012).

Hence, the literature has shown that the enlightened self-interest rationale (ESI), moral obligation and personal rewards are the most likely motivators of small businesses when being socially responsible towards their local communities.

Continuing in the same line of thought, besides ESI, moral obligation and personal rewards, the literature about SMEs discusses variables that might influence BSR and the manner in which the success of the business is perceived.

One of the characteristics of an SME is that the owner's attitudes and personal values will guide the business' social responsibility practices (Thompson *et al.*, 1993; Miller and Besser, 2000). Hence it is very important to understand the context; that is, where the owner comes from and the community in which the business operates. Below, the researcher will critically analyse those variables separated by characteristics of the owner, business and community.

#### 2.3.1.1 Characteristics of the owner

The variables critically collected by the researcher about the owner are education, length of community residence and closeness with members of the community. The researcher has decided to study those three variables because they were consistently presented by the literature as being the most relevant when looking at the owner's characteristics (Besser, 2012)

The education of the owner is a variable that is greatly explored by the literature (Oliver, 1984; Hayghe, 1991; Smith, 1994). It is shown that owners with a longer duration of school time (e.g. having completed high school or attained a college degree) might be more willing to support the community than owners that did not have the opportunity to complete their studies. Besser and Miller (2004) argue that education might influence the way owner/managers assess the benefits resulting from being socially responsible.

The length of community residency (Onibokun and Curry, 1976; Besser, 1998) is another variable that is shown by the literature as having a positive relation with community involvement. Besser (2012) argues that the longer the owner has been living in the community, the higher the possibility that they will be more committed to the community.

The literature also shows that when the owner of the business knows people from the local community personally, by name, (Freudenburg, 1986) or has developed friendships in the community (Stinner *et al.*, 1990) they are more inclined to support the local community, because they have then developed a relationship that goes beyond just the business.

#### 2.3.1.2 Characteristics of the business

The variables critically collected by the literature about the characteristics of the business that might influence the support provided to the local communities can be listed as the size of the business and years of operation.

The literature has shown that the size of the business, here defined as the number of employees, might influence business involvement in the local community (van Auken

and Ireland, 1982; Chrisman and Archer, 1984). In other words, the bigger the firm, the more resources it will have, and therefore the higher the possibility of community support. This topic has been argued by many authors when comparing the social responsibility of SME and large businesses.

This research will focus on Brazilian SMEs. The number of employees varies from one (the owner) to 19 employees for micro businesses and from 20 to 99 employees for small businesses.

Years of operation is also suggested by the literature as a factor that would impact BSR (Aldrich and Auster, 1986; Cragg and King, 1989). Besser and Miller (2004) argue that the longer the business has been in the community, the higher the possibility of community involvement.

#### 2.3.1.3 Characteristics of the community

The variables critically collected by the literature about the community are the size of the community, proximity to metropolitan areas and community culture of support.

The literature also suggests that it is possible that small business owners feel more motivated to support communities that are small and which closely depend on the business (Besser, 1999) than larger communities where a variety of businesses can be found. Besser and Miller (2004) argue that this happens because there is a feeling of responsibility towards the local community that accepted and supported the business, which generates a positive environment for support.

Smith and Oakley (1994) suggest that business owners may be more prone to support the local community if the communities are far from big cities (metropolitan areas) (Besser, 1998). This characteristic has a very similar connotation to the previous one. The idea of a small town, in need of support, might generate a favourable environment for support.

The literature about the topic also shows that communities' values can influence positively or negatively on the behaviour of small businesses that are part of the community. In other words, if the community is known for being supportive of local businesses, business owners will be more likely to support the community in return.

However, the opposite is also true. If the community lacks support, small businesses might not be motivated to contribute to social betterment (Besser, 1998).

The heterogeneity of the SMEs makes it difficult to guarantee that all those characteristics will be true all the time. It is argued that education and time of residency in the community does not necessarily assure community support (Besser and Miller, 2004). The characteristics of the community are also strongly debated in the literature and many critics suggest that every community has different needs and expectations, and it is wrong to generalise (Kilkenny *et al.*, 1999).

Nevertheless, the characteristics presented here were empirically tested by many academic papers and they are presented here as variables that might or might not be found in the findings of this study. The researcher has decided to present all relevant variables to allow for an extensive analysis of the data in chapter 4.

## **2.4 Perceived success to small business owners**

This dissertation is aiming to understand the perception of the success of small and micro business. Being successful has different meanings to different people. In general, it can be defined as the accomplishment of an objective (Foley & Green 1989). Often, in the business world, business success is measured as financial success. However, the financial criteria are only one way of assessing business performance (Jennings and Beaver, 1997; Wood, 2006; Koch and Strotmann, 2006; Li *et al.*, 2015). It is also argued that large businesses are known for using financial criteria to measure business success (Hede *et al.*, 2009).

It is suggested that to measure the success of the small business it is necessary to understand the reasons why the owner has decided to be an entrepreneur (Walker and Brown, 2016).

There are two different motivations to become an entrepreneur: by being “pulled” or “pushed” into the business environment (Brodie and Stanworth, 1998). The literature suggests that the “pull” motivation is intrinsic and positive and the “push” motivation is extrinsic and negative.

Someone influenced by ‘pull’ motivation might have a desire to be self-employed, is looking for a more flexible schedule, wants a change in lifestyle or even has the desire of increasing wealth (Birley and Westhead, 1994; Burke *et al.*, 2002; Benzing and Chu, 2009). Someone that is influenced by ‘push’ motivation may have lost a job and found themselves in a situation where they need to be enterprising in order to take care of their families (Brush, 1992; Moore *et al.*, 1997; Loscocco, 1997; Curran and Blackburn, 2001).

Moving forward, other authors argue that a more multifaceted way of evaluating business success is necessary because the financial criteria are not sufficient to assess the “multidimensional aspects” of business success of an SME (Tan and Peng, 2003; Wood, 2006; Koch and Strotmann, 2006; Andersén, 2010; Simpson *et al.*, 2012).

The literature offers a list of non-financial measurements of business success, such as ‘autonomy, job satisfaction or the ability to balance work and family responsibilities’ (Walker and Brown, 2016, p. 579). Also, business owners’ sense of achievement and business continuity can be categorised as non-financial measurements (Greenbank, 2001).

Luk (1996) argues that the owners’ satisfaction towards the business, independent of its financial position, is considered to be the major measure of business success for SMEs.

Murphy *et al.* (1996) added to the knowledge by arguing that “hard work and commitment” to the business can also be seen as a business success to SMEs.

It is harder to quantify non-financial measurements of business success because they come from the perception of each person individually, while financial measurements, such as revenue and profit represent the true financial position of the business. In other words, financial measurements are quantifiable and non-financial measurements are subjective (Jenkins, 2006).

Every owner has their definition of what they consider as business success. Miller *et al.* (2011) stated that for small local retailers, business success is when they can “contribute to the local community” and still survive.

Razalan *et al.* (2017) argued that small local retailers might see recognition of their good actions within the local community and good reputation as business success. This

relationship can generate a competitive advantage to the local business (Besser, 1999; Maignan and Ferrell, 2001; Campbell and Park, 2016).

The relationship between perceived business success and business social responsibility has been argued in the literature and the findings have not been conclusive. Waddock and Graves (1997), Hillman and Keim (2001), Margolis and Walsh (2003), Orlitzky *et al.* (2003) and others have argued that there is a positive relationship between perceived business success and socially responsible practices. However, it is also posited that neutral or even negative results can be found from the relationship between business success and BSR (Aupperle *et al.*, 1985; McGuire *et al.*, 1988; Fonseca and Ferro, 2016).

The researcher recognizes the importance of financial criteria when assessing business success. However, as presented by the literature, the use of non-financial criteria to measure how SME evaluate the business success based on the socially responsible practices will provide a deeper understanding of the topic, which could not be done if only financial criteria were used (Stanforth and Muske 2001; Lee *et al.*, 2010).

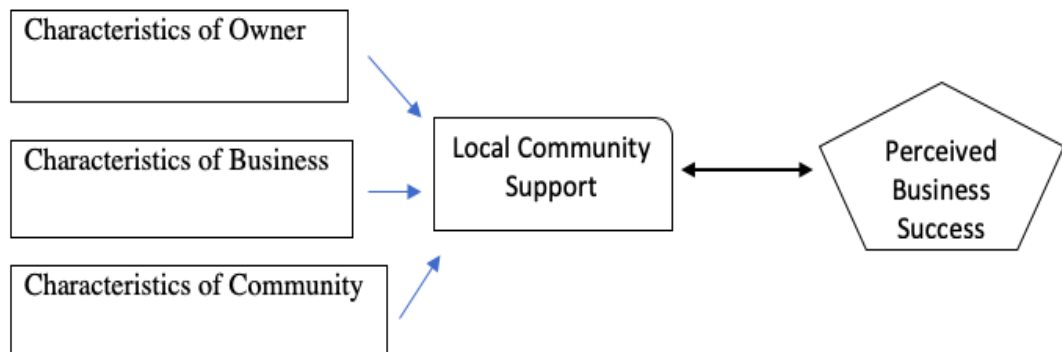
Therefore, this dissertation will focus on the non-financial criteria of business success presented by Walker and Brown (2016) to assess the perceived business success of a micro supermarket in the Northeast of Brazil associated to its socially responsible practices.

## **2.5 Conceptual Framework**

This conceptual framework is derived from a comprehensive literature review. From the literature, the author has selected potential variables to be analysed as motivating causes for the support of local communities for small and micro-businesses. The researcher will focus on three different characteristics: Characteristics of the owner, business and community.

As presented by the literature review, small business owners can be influenced to support the local community by the characteristics of the owner themselves, the business itself and the community around it. The way the business owner perceives personal business success can either be influenced (or not influenced) by the support provided to the community.

### Perceived business success and local community support conceptual framework



*Figure 1 Perceived Business Success and Community Support Conceptual Framework (Campos, 2020)*

The objective of the study is to assess if the relationship between an SME and the local community affects the perception of business success of a micro supermarket. To do that, this conceptual framework will support the analysis of the data collected from the semi-structured interviews.

The idea behind this conceptual framework is to show that there are a large number of factors that can influence small and micro-businesses to support their local communities. The characteristics of the owner, business and community are shown by the literature that if certain characteristics can be found together, there might be a positive indication that the owner could be more inclined to provide support to their communities.

However, literature has also shown that sometimes said expectations are not found (Besser and Miller, 2004) because each SME has unique characteristics and the reasons for the existence of the business can also change from business to business, which can affect the way the owner looks at the community around it (Walker and Brown, 2016).

The researcher has selected two variables from each characteristic to be deeply analysed during the data analysis section. The variables were selected having in mind the research objectives of this study.

First, from the characteristics of the owner, length of community residency and level of education are variables that will allow the researcher to deeply understand the connection between the owner and the community.



Second, from the characteristics of the business, size and years of operations were the variables chosen. Those variables were consistently highlighted by the literature review and they will be of paramount importance when comparing the findings from this research to the literature available.

Third, from the characteristics of the community, size and support provided by the community were the variables that were most closely related to the objectives of this study.

The last point the author wants to highlight in the conceptual framework is the relationship between community support and perceived business success. As presented by the literature review, the perception of business success can be measured by financial and non-financial factors. Also, success might have different meanings to different people (Walker and Brown, 2016). The objective behind analysing this relationship deeply is to understand if small business owners can see their businesses as successful, even though they do not support the community which they are part of; or if the relationship between the community and business is one of the determinants of a striving and successful environment for all the parties involved.

The arrows used in the conceptual framework were used to express the relationship between the ideas presented by the model. The two-headed arrow between community support and perceived business success highlights the fourth research objective of this study. The researcher expects to gather sufficient and relevant data from the semi-structured interviews to address the research objectives of this dissertation.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

This literature review aims to provide theoretical support to address the research objectives, as well as to develop the conceptual framework.

The researcher's intention was to present literature that discusses SME motivation to support local communities in Latin America, however, most of the literature available focuses on developed countries (Moore and Spence, 2006). It is argued by many authors that business social responsibility research about Latin America is one of the least covered

(Peinado-Vara, 2006; Visser, 2008). It is also argued that a few studies about Latin America focus on descriptive case studies of large businesses (Haslam, 2004).

Other authors highlight that the literature about the business social responsibility of developed countries may not be applicable for developing countries (Fox, 2004; Prieto-Carrón, 2006).

Further, there is a need for more studies based on developing countries (Dobers and Halme, 2009). Thus, this study will contribute to the knowledge of the business social responsibility of small and micro enterprises in Latin America, more specifically, in Brazil.

### **3 Methodology and Research Design**

#### **3.1 Overview**

Research can be defined as the process a researcher needs to go through to represent the information available in an organised and expressive way (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Greener (2008) highlights the fact that research methods and research methodology are many times considered the same, but they in fact refer to different issues. Research methods are referred to how the primary data is collected, such as by interviews or questionnaires. The research methodology is focused on the philosophies and approaches selected for the study, such as interpretive philosophy or inductive approach.

This section will highlight the researcher's preferences regarding research philosophy and methods to analyse and present the primary data collected from semi-structured interviews. Said preferences were based on the research objectives and the best way to gather data to address them.

It is essential to select a methodology that addresses the needs of the study, by answering the research objectives. A philosophy and research method which does not suitably support the question being asked in a study can result in the data being inaccurate or incorrect, and the findings and conclusions irrelevant. The author shall assume an interpretive philosophy with an inductive approach for this study.

The research design chosen for this study was exploratory. Robson (2002, p. 59) suggests that by the use of exploratory research, the researcher will have a better chance of understanding 'what is happening, to seek new insights, to ask questions and to assess the phenomena in a new light'. Kothari (2004) argues that exploratory research does not focus on proving a theory; instead, it helps in the development of knowledge.

#### **3.2 Research Philosophy**

Every step and decision of research needs to be explained, so that others, when reading and analysing the work, can understand all the steps of the research process (Crotty, 1998). It is critically important that a researcher selects the correct research philosophy and approach to arrive at relevant conclusions which address the research objectives.

The ‘research onion’ developed by Saunders et al. (2009) presents all the choices available to the researcher. Peeling the layers of the ‘research onion’ allows the researcher to consider four philosophies: positivism, realism, interpretivism and pragmatism.

Research philosophy is the term relating to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge (Saunders et al., 2019). From reviewing the ‘research onion’s different philosophies, the author has decided for interpretivism as the chosen research philosophy of this study.

Interpretivists believe that there is not a universal rule of thumb for social sciences research, because every time research is done with different people, in a different scenario, it will produce different outcomes (Hammersley, 2013).

According to Saunders et al. (2019, p.182) “the purpose of interpretivist research is to create new, richer understanding and interpretations of social worlds and contexts”. Creswell (2007) added to the topic, arguing that interpretive research does not have the objective of generalisation, but of learning from each unique phenomenon.

Since this research will focus on the perceptions of the participants, Bryman and Bell (2011) suggest that the interpretivist approach allows for interpretation and flexibility. In short, the interpretive philosophy gives the researcher a better opportunity to understand the perceptions and feelings of the participants in the study, generating valid and rich data.

The literature also discusses the limitations of using the interpretive philosophy. Cohen *et al.* (2013) argue that by using an interpretive philosophy, the researcher will not be able to generalise the results of the study, an issue that would not occur if using a more positivist philosophy, which aims for generalisation.

Another limitation is presented by Mack (2010), who states that the research outcome of a study with interpretivist philosophy will be affected by the researcher’s point of view and perceptions because this philosophy tends to be “subjective” instead of “objective”.

The researcher has weighed the benefits and limitations of the philosophic choice for this study and has concluded that the methodology selected will not affect the quality and validity of data gathered. This research does not aim for generalisation and regarding the subjectivity limitation, this research focuses on the perception of business success, so the

use of a more objective philosophy, such as positivism, could restrain the researcher during the process.

### **3.3 Research Approach**

For the approach to theory development, the researcher has decided to use the inductive approach over the deductive. According to Saunders *et al.* (2009), the inductive approach is appropriate for social sciences research, while the deductive is more appropriate for natural science research. The inductive approach is also preferred when applying an interpretivist philosophy.

Lodico *et al.* (2010) argue that the inductive approach helps to build knowledge about topics that have not been deeply studied yet. Therefore, a study that aims to present new insights about the SMEs in Brazil requires an approach that allows enough flexibility to the researcher to go deeper in the analyses.

The researcher's aim is not to prove the theory about business social responsibility but to provide insights yet unknown (Gratton and Jones, 2009). Thus, the inductive approach would be the best fit.

The main criticism of the inductive approach is that if the researcher's perceptions and observations are incorrect, it would cause the findings and conclusions of the study to be incorrect (Gratton and Jones, 2009; Alexandridis, 2006)

The researcher has critically analysed the benefits and limitations of the research approach for this study and has concluded that the strategy selected will not affect the quality and validity of data gathered. The researcher is aware of the risk of bias because of incorrect observations, but this disadvantage is present with each study that utilises the inductive approach.

### **3.4 Research Strategy**

Since the researcher is using an interpretive philosophy, the research strategy choice that better fits this study is of qualitative research. Saunders *et al.* (2019) suggest that, since the analysis will come from words or pictures, their meanings, many times, will be unclear and it will be necessary to clarify answers with the interviewees (participants).

Strauss and Corbin (1990, p 11) described qualitative research as a type of research that the conclusions are not originated from "statistical procedures". Additionally, Denzin and

Lincoln (1994, p. 2) claimed that “qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter.” Also, Dess and Robinson (1984) suggest that qualitative research is an effective way to collect relevant data about the small business world.

The literature argues the benefits and limitations of qualitative research. Denzin (1989) states that qualitative research allows for interpretations of feeling and experience, taking into consideration the context where the phenomenon is taking place (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Denzin and Lincoln (2002) added to this argument by suggesting that the “human experience” is better understood and described by qualitative research rather than quantitative research.

On the other hand, authors have suggested that qualitative research focuses too much on the perception and experiences of the participants and gives less importance to the environment (Cumming, 2001; Silverman, 2010).

Another limitation investigated by many authors is that qualitative research might receive low credibility when compared to quantitative research (Sallee and Flood, 2012; Berg, 2009). Richards & Richards (1994) stated that qualitative research may “neglect” other variables of the study and keep the focus on the perceptions and feelings mostly.

The researcher has critically analysed the benefits and limitations of the research strategy for this study and has concluded that the strategy selected will not affect the quality and validity of data gathered. To address the research objectives, this study will in fact benefit from qualitative research.

The author has decided to use a single case study of a micro business in the northeast of Brazil, Mercantil Nazareno.

The data collection will be made by using a case study of a micro business in the Northeast of Brazil. The objectives of this research are to understand if SMEs support their local communities, what motivates them to provide support and to assess if the perception of success of those companies can be associated with the support provided to the local communities.

By using a case study, the researcher has the opportunity to understand the context where the phenomenon in the study takes place. Such deep understanding would not be possible by using a survey strategy, which is a common tool for quantitative research (Yin, 2018).

When using a case study strategy, the research will be rich in details about the topic in the study and it will bring empirical insights to the literature of business social responsibility of small and micro enterprises in developing countries in Latin America. Dubois and Gadde (2002, p. 554) suggested that “the interaction between a phenomenon and its context is best understood through an in-depth case study”.

Siggelkow (2007) argues that another benefit for the use of a case study is that it links the “real world” and the theory behind the phenomenon together. By creating this link, the researcher will be able to offer a richer contribution to the literature about the topic in the study.

The researcher has decided to go for a single case study approach for many reasons. Since the research strategy is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon, a large amount of time and effort will be needed for the collection and analysis of the data. Also, the time boundaries set by the dissertation process restricts the possibility to have more than one case study. Finally, Blumberg *et al.* (2005) assert that a single case study is “sufficient, as it will offer as yet unknown insights” about the phenomenon in the study since every case study is unique.

Patton (2014) also suggests that one single case is not enough to allow for “broad generalisations”, but that ‘logical generalisations’ can be made depending on the quality and validity of the data collected, and it can be called as a critical case or crucial case. In other words, the findings of research done with only one case study can logically be generalised to only extremely similar cases. Patton (2014) argues that critical cases can be found in social science research and not only in natural science. Hence, the researcher has decided to use a single critical case study for this dissertation.

The literature has also argued about the limitations of using a single case study. Maoz (2002, p.164) suggests that “the use of the case study absolves the author from any kind of methodological considerations”. In other words, he was implying that by using a case study, the researcher will be free of any methodological structures. However, this critique

does not hold ground, because it is possible to find in the literature authors presenting the different techniques applicable to case studies (Bennett and Elman, 2010).

### **3.5 Sampling and sample size**

Sampling and sample size are of extreme importance, independent of the research strategy selected for the study, whether qualitative or quantitative.

The researcher has chosen non-probability sampling over probability sampling. Probability sampling is done based on a random selection of participants. When using non-probability sampling, the researcher can choose the participants subjectively (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

Saunders *et al.* (2019) explore the topic by saying that when using non-probability sampling, the researcher can handpick the participants, from a pool of options, choosing those respondents that will enable the researcher to address the research objectives.

One of the major disadvantages of non-probability sampling is that the researcher will not be sure that she is representing the population truly (Allen, 2017).

By using the non-probability sampling, the researcher has selected a small supermarket, that has been operating in the local community for a long period.

Within non-probability sampling, the sampling method selected for this study was purposeful sampling. In purposeful sampling, the researcher has the freedom to select the respondents she believes will have specific characteristics that will address the research objectives (Koerber and McMichael, 2008). Coyne (1997, p. 624) complements the topic by stating that by using this method, the researcher selects the participants having in mind the needs of the research, instead of just interviewing random people that might not bring valuable insights to the study.

A pitfall of purposeful sampling is that the researcher might face the risk of not selecting a sample that accurately represents the population or phenomenon in study. To avoid this pitfall, the researcher has decided to interview three different groups of participants that are directly connected to the research objectives of this study. The groups will be divided in owner, employees and members of the community (not employees).



It has previously been recommended by the literature that qualitative studies present a minimum sample size of at least 12 interviews to allow for data saturation (Guest et al., 2006; Fugard and Potts, 2015; Braun and Clarke, 2016).

On the other hand, some authors argued that the sample size varies accordingly to the nature and need of the research. Vasileiou *et al.* (2018) stated that the sample size must be selected by focusing on “pragmatic considerations”, such as time constraints for the dissertation and limited availability of respondents due to distance or other variables.

Koerber and McMichael (2008) argue that quality is more important than quantity, in qualitative research, since generalisation of findings is not the main objective of the study.

In short, based on what presented by the literature review, the researcher has decided to interview the owner, three employees and five members of the community.

### **3.6 Time horizon**

The researcher has a choice of either a longitudinal or a cross-sectional research time horizon. The researcher has selected a cross-sectional time horizon, due to time limitations/constraints. The researcher understands that cross-sectional research does not offer a continuous perspective of the phenomenon, but instead a “snapshot” of it, but having in mind the time limitations, it is the most appropriate approach for this research (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

Sedgwick (2014), concerning the limitations of the cross-sectional time horizon, argues that it is rather challenging to guarantee that what has been observed at the moment in time that the study was made is a true representation of the phenomenon.

The researcher has critically analysed the benefits and limitations of the time horizon for this study and has concluded that the strategy selected will not affect the quality of data gathered. The researcher is aware of the risks of bias this approach may cause, but this disadvantage is present with all research that utilises a cross-sectional time horizon approach.

### **3.7 Collection Primary Data**

#### **3.7.1 Sources**

According to Blumberg *et al.* (2005, p. 378), interviews are the most used “source data collection” in case studies (qualitative studies). The other common sources are observation and archival documents.

Having in mind the time constraints of this dissertation, the researcher has decided to use a mono-method qualitative approach for the collection of data, by the use of semi-structured interviews. This type of interview allows the researcher to explore different topics and still give the participant freedom to talk freely (Saunders et al., 2019).

The business selected to be studied in the case study was Mercantil Nazareno. Mercantil Nazareno is a micro supermarket. The business employs 11 employees, and the owner is also the manager (SME typical business). This business was established in 1994, in Barra-Nova, district of Redenção, in the northeast of Brazil.

The researcher has stipulated a time frame on how long she is going to measure the company’s business social responsibility. A two-year time frame has been selected, having in mind that people’s memories are less reliable if they are required to remember actions that happened too long ago, and this could lead to poor quality data.

For the interview with the owner/manager, the researcher aims to gather a better understanding of the context which the business is inserted at and a better understanding of the business itself.

The researcher interviewed three employees. The selection of participants has been made on how long the person has been working for the company (seniority) and the influential power this person has towards the management. It is important to mention that those variables are not mutually exclusive. In other words, the employee might have been working for the company for a long time but does not have any kind of influential power towards the management or the employee has been working for the company for a short period but has influential power towards the management.

The researcher also interviewed five members of the community. The author made sure that those participants have never been an employee of the company previously, to avoid bias. The selection of the members of the community was done through the social media Facebook. A location filter provided by Facebook was used to ensure that the pool from where the participants were selected was exclusively within the local community.

The researcher understands that the use of Facebook as a selection tool might cause bias because not all members of the community are part of this social network. Thus, older people, that might be of extreme importance for the study, may potentially be excluded if they are not part of the network.

The author also recognizes that the filter of the location provided by Facebook can be manually changed and that people that do not live in the area could be mistakenly selected. As a measure to minimise bias, the author made sure that every person selected as a possible participant was asked the following question: ‘Are you a resident of the community of Barra Nova?’

The researcher has decided to use the social network Facebook as the chosen strategy because it was the only viable way to connect to the people of this community since travelling to the location is not an option. The other option available to the researcher was to request the Mercantil Nazareno’s owner or employees to recommend the participants, however, this strategy would generate an even bigger bias.

DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) suggested that an interview would have a duration between “30 minutes and more than an hour to complete”. Japen (2005) states that 45 minutes is the minimum duration recommended for an academic interview, allowing this way the researcher to gather sufficient data to address the research objectives.

The researcher has decided to follow the recommendation offered by DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) for the interview’s duration.

According to Saunders *et al.* (2019), qualitative data can be of three types: Verbal, Textual and Visual data. The researcher will be collecting verbal data from the interviews since all the interviews will be converted into transcriptions.

The researcher will be using two different types of questions during the interviews: Open and Probing questions (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). By having different types of questions, it will be possible to allow the respondents to have some freedom during the interview, but the researcher will still have control to bring them back to the topic in case their line of thought digresses from the focus of the interview.

The researcher made use of probes or prompts during the interview, as in a way to incite clarification or development in the answers of the participant (Holloway and Wheeler

2010). Smith et al (2009) proposed that probes are mostly needed for questions that might cause ambiguity in the participants answers, or for abstract questions that need more details.

The interviews were conducted in Portuguese, the Brazilian language and they were recorded by teleconference with Zoom. The translation into English was made by the researcher herself. Temple and Young (2004) argue that if the researcher considers herself “neutral and objective” and is fluent in the language of the participants of the interview, the researcher can be responsible for the translations. Thus, the use of an external translator is not necessary.

Young and Ackerman (2001) added to the discussion suggesting that some researchers consider the fact that they are the ones translating the interviews as a “check to the validity of interpretations”. In other words, the researcher can guarantee that the meaning of what was said in the first language (Portuguese) is the same in the translated language (English).

### 3.7.2 Access and Ethical Issues

At all times the author was compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). European GDPR guidelines were used in this research, because it does not present major differences (Coos, 2019) as compared to Brazil’s counterpart, Lei Geral de Proteção de Dados (LGPD). No information was shared without the express permission of the participants of the interview. No personal information, besides age, gender and school level, were required from the respondents during the interviews, since the author was only interested in the perceptions and opinions of the respondents.

Gathered data were stored on a Google Doc Cloud platform which is GDPR compliant in Ireland (Google, 2020).

The respondents of the interviews first had to consent to proceed with the interview. They received two documents. The first is the “Plain Language Statement”, containing information stating the name of the author, the name of the college and Masters course, the purpose of the study, the estimated time to complete the interview, information letting

the participants know that personal data will not be collected, that the findings from the interview will be used solely for this dissertation, that all names of the interviewees will be kept anonymous, that the participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time, and that the interviews and transcriptions will be destroyed after the approval of the dissertation. A college email address is also provided to contact the author if required, as well as an email of the course director as independent college staff.

The second form is the “Consent Form”, where the participants will give their consent to be a participant of the research by signing a form. This form contains similar information from the Plain Language Statement. The participant will be required to tick the boxes confirming they understood their rights, sign and date the form. (Sample of said forms can be found in the appendix on pages A to D).

The “Plain Language Statement” and the “Consent Form” will be written in Brazilian Portuguese language, to guarantee that the participants have fully understood the objectives and benefits of the research.

According to Saunders *et al.* (2019, p. 216) “The general ethical issue is that the research design should not subject those you are researching to the risk of embarrassment, pain, harm or any other material disadvantage”.

### **3.8 Approach to Data Analysis**

The researcher has decided to use template analysis (TA) as the approach for the data analysis. Template analysis is an adaptation from thematic analysis. It is a technique where the researcher will develop codes from the literature review and some primary data. After that, the researcher will apply said codes to the remaining of the data collected, and will revise and refine the codes (Brooks *et al.*, 2015), to better address the research objectives. The coding permits the researcher to see what has been most mentioned and what has not been mentioned at all (King, 2012), by presenting a relationship between information that have similar or contrasting meanings..

The coding is also important to be done before the data collection itself because it will help the researcher to look for specific information when writing the questions for the interviews or when performing the interview itself (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

During the data analysis, the researcher will have to identify from the interviews information that can be coded as relating to said codes. After finishing the coding process, the researcher will have to interpret the information and start writing the findings.

The codebook for the data analysis can be found at chapter 4.

The researcher will be using self-memos as well as the interview recordings for support during the data collection and analysis. By using memos, it will be possible to take notes of points that materialise during the interviews and data analysis itself (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Those memos can be used to make iterations in the interview questions, as well as literature review and conceptual framework, if necessary, to better address the research objectives.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

The purpose of academic research is to investigate and address its research objectives (Collis and Hussey, 2014), and by assuming an interpretivist philosophy with an inductive approach, the research objective will not only further the author's knowledge but will provide new empirical data, by offering new insights about the topic.

This research will bring insights about SME and local community relationship in Latin America, more specifically, in the northeast of Brazil. Thus, by empirically presenting what motivates SME to provide community support, if support is provided, as well understanding if the owner/manager links the business success to socially responsible practices, will contribute to the knowledge of this topic, by helping to fill the gap about SMEs in Latin America and their business social responsibility involvement.

The researcher argues that the limitations caused by the current pandemic will not affect the quality of the study, since the interviews will still occur face-to-face, by the use of the Internet. Also, it might even bring some benefits for the study, whereas the participants can feel more relaxed at being interviewed from a distance.

## 4 Presentation and Discussion of the Findings

### 4.1 Overview

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the primary data gathered and analysed according to the research methodology set out in chapter 3. There, the researcher had presented the reasons for selecting a mono method qualitative approach for data collection, by the use of semi-structured interviews.

There were nine interviews, each lasting up to 40 minutes, conducted over two weeks, from July 10<sup>th</sup> to July 16<sup>th</sup>, with the owner of Mercantil Nazareno, 3 employees of Mercantil Nazareno and 5 members of the community where the business is located, the community of Barra Nova.

Table 1: Overview of respondent's cohort

Respondent	Role	Age	Gender	School Level	Years living in the community
1	Owner	57	Male	Fundamental Incomplete	> 26 years
2	Community Member	25	Female	Bachelor's Degree	> 20 years
3	Community Member	58	Female	High School Complete	> 23 years
4	Community Member	27	Male	High School Complete	27 years
5	Community Member	27	Male	Bachelor's Degree	27 years
6	Community Member	36	Female	High School Complete	36 years
7	Employee	23	Male	Bachelor's Degree	> 20 years
8	Employee	21	Male	High School Complete	21 years
9	Employee	28	Male	Bachelor's Degree	28 years

The nine interviews can be found in Appendix E at the end of this research. The interviews have been translated by the researcher herself.

In this chapter, the researcher will present the findings and discuss them, in turn comparing them with the current literature. Finally, the researcher will show how those findings contribute to the knowledge of business social responsibility in the northeast of Brazil, focusing in small and micro enterprises that present extreme similar characteristics to the company used in the case study.

## 4.2 Findings and discussions from the data collected

Below are presented a list of codes that were used during the data analysis. The codes were generated from the objectives, and they are *a priori* (theory-driven) codes.

Table 2: Coding system for data classification

Question	Code
Support to the local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social activities</li> <li>- Non-financial support</li> <li>- Financial support</li> </ul>
Motivation to support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enlightened self-interest</li> <li>- Moral obligation</li> <li>- Personal rewards</li> </ul>
Level of community involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School level of the owner</li> <li>- Time living in the community of the owner</li> <li>- Size of the business</li> <li>- Years of operation</li> <li>- Size of the community</li> <li>- Support from the community (Return)</li> </ul>
Perceived business success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial measurements of success</li> <li>- Non-financial measurements of success</li> <li>- Business success and social responsibility</li> </ul>

### 4.2.1 First Objective

**To investigate if Mercantil Nazareno (Nazareno's Market), a Brazilian SME, supports its local community with business social responsibility actions**

The first objective of this research was to determine if the Mercantil Nazareno supported its local community with business social responsibility (BSR) actions. The participants were divided in response regarding this topic.

To start assessing the topic, the researcher wanted to establish who the participants believed was responsible for improving and developing the local community.



The Owner, Participant 1, was the only one who answered that himself or his company were not responsible for the local community.

*“No, I do not feel responsible. The government is the one that is really responsible. The company is not responsible for community development. We help because of common sense, but we are not responsible for the growth of the community”* (Owner, Participant 1).

The other participants presented a quite consistent answer, suggesting that the local businesses were responsible for improving the communities they are part of.

*“I think that the local businessmen should be part and assume this responsibility. Also, the local government, with projects, with incentives for the businesses”* (Community Member, Participant 2)

*“I think it's the whole group together. I believe that the politicians, the citizens, the businessmen, they all have a place and time to help”* (Community Member, Participant 6).

The author questioned the participants if they were helped or if they have ever heard about the Mercantil Nazareno helping the community. The responses were divided.

Table 3: Company's support towards the community

Participant	Provide support to the local community
Owner – P1	Yes
Community Member – P2	Yes
Community Member – P3	Yes
Community Member – P4	No
Community Member – P5	No
Community Member – P6	No
Employee – P7	Yes
Employee – P8	Yes
Employee – P9	Yes

*“He usually does. Usually, he helps in cultural events. Sometimes people come asking for contributions. Also, he helps when we have bigger problems here in the community, for example, he helps with road maintenance. This is the government responsibility, but sometimes, most of the times, they don't do they part. Some people get together to try to*

*fix the roads and they come asking for help, like money, to pay for the service” (Employee, Participant 8).*

*“Absolutely. I have, yes. For example, people who are temporarily unable to work, I help them with food baskets, or even if they need medicine or financial support to pay the electric bill. I also helped with community parties, church parties, and so on. When someone comes to ask us to sponsor or collaborate with some activity, I collaborate. I like to be part of those activities” (Owner, Participant 1).*

According to Razalan *et al.* (2017) small local retailers find ways to support the community by being creative in their actions. The support described by the owner reaffirms what has been presented by the literature.

*“I don't think it has helped that much. Neither with social nor financial issues” (Community Member, participant 5).*

*“So, besides employing some people of the community... besides helping to produce some income in the region, he has helped very punctually on some commemorative dates” (Community Member, participant 2).*

The majority of the participants suggested that the business does provide support to the community. Three out of five members of the community, however, do not recognise the support. Most of the members of the community also informed that they have not been helped by the business.

Community Member, Participant 3, has confirmed that she has been helped by the Mercantil Nazareno. Participant 3 is the owner of a small restaurant in the community. The owner of Mercantil Nazareno collected products from her restaurant that would otherwise be lost based on expiration dates because she was obliged to close her business during the pandemic.

*“I will talk about the help he gave me. Now that we are in the middle of the COVID virus situation, it was a difficult situation here for me. He helped me with my goods because I would not be able to sell. I would not be able to do anything. He collected my goods and said that when I start working again, he would return it to me. He did it with a good heart” (Community Member, Participant 3).*

When questioned about the advertisement for the help provided towards the community, the answers were unanimous. All participants agreed that Mercantil Nazareno does not make any kind of publicity about the support provided.

Owner, Participant 1 affirmed that he does not find necessary to disclose the help provided.

*“I have never disclosed them because I did not think it is necessary. I think that the really important thing is to have the desire to help and I do not tell other people. I help because I want to”* (Owner, Participant 1).

This finding can be connected to the reason why it is problematic to find proof of business social responsibility activities provided by small and micro businesses in Latin America, and more specifically, in Brazil. Small and micro businesses do not formally report those activities (Gutierrez and Jones, 2004).

The participants were also asked about what they think the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno could provide to the community to be more socially responsible.

*“He could employ more people from the community. By doing that, he would help to grow the region even more”* (Community Member, Participant 2).

*“I believe that one of the actions that could be good would be to help the public schools regarding school meals, for example. Because many children are in need, and the government is not giving enough attention to them”* (Community Member, Participant 5).

After comparing the findings, the researcher has concluded that the members of the community do not recognize the support provided by the business. Throughout the interviews, they confirmed that the business has sponsored cultural events in the community, but some of them do not acknowledge this “help” as being socially responsible.

One of the reasons for this lack of acceptance might be the lack of publicity from the business itself about its social activities. Also, another explanation might be that the members of the community have very high expectations towards the local business because they have seen the business grow and to them, the business is not a “small business” anymore (the size of the business will be presented when discussing objective three).

This finding is confirmed by the literature review. Spence (2000) and Southwell (2004) argued that socially responsible practices are not easily recognisable at SMEs because they might differ from the CSR practices that large companies usually do. For the

interviews, it was clear that the members of the community do not consider sponsorship of cultural events “enough” to name the business as socially responsible. Jenkins (2006) also argued that SME contributions to the local communities might differ from what large companies might do.

In short, based on the answers provided by the participants, the Mercantil Nazareno supports its local community by sponsoring cultural events promoted by other people inside the community. Mentions of other types of support, such as financial support and non-financial support, like food baskets, medicine and clothes have been presented by the employees and the owner, but they have not been confirmed by all members of the community.

#### 4.2.2 Second Objective

**To identify what motivates Mercantil Nazareno (Nazareno’s Market) to support its local community with business social responsibility actions**

To address this objective, the author has asked the participants what they think has motivated the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno to support the community. This question has evolved throughout the interviews to accommodate what the participants believe has demotivated the owner to provide support, since many have answered that “no community support” was offered by the business.

Table 4: What motivates the business to support the local community

Participant	What motivates the owner to support the LC
Owner – P1	Personal rewards
Community Member – P2	Enlightened self-interest
Community Member – P3	Moral obligation
Community Member – P4	Enlightened self-interest
Community Member – P5	Moral obligation
Community Member – P6	Moral obligation
Employee – P7	Personal rewards
Employee – P8	Personal rewards
Employee – P9	Personal rewards

The researcher objective was to determine what was the main motivation of the owner to support the local community (LC). The literature review presented in chapter two of this study had highlighted three possible motivations: the enlightened self-interest, moral obligation and personal reward (Besser and Miller, 2004).

*“I’m motivated to meet the need of a person who needs help, to help an event to be completed, those things”* (Owner, participant 1).

*“I think what motivates him the most is to help his neighbours. I think it's something inherent to him. It's not so much the social responsibility of the company, but it's something more of himself. I don't think that he thinks much about the benefits the business might get when he helps, you know”* (Employee, Participant 8).

The participants were asked if they believed that by helping the community, the owner would be also helping the business. All the participants, included the owner, agreed to this statement. In other words, the unanimous view is that enlightened self-interest is the real motivation to support the community. This finding reaffirms the literature that suggested that enlightened self-interest is one of the most popular explanations given for why small businesses support or are motivated to support their local communities (Besser and Miller, 2004; Kilkenny et al., 1999).

Table 5: Community pressure as a motivator for support

Participant	Community Pressure
Owner – P1	No
Community Member – P2	Yes
Community Member – P3	Yes
Community Member – P4	No
Community Member – P5	No
Community Member – P6	No
Employee – P7	No
Employee – P8	No
Employee – P9	No

All participants were asked if they believe the Mercantil Nazareno was pressured by the community to provide support, or, for those participants that answered that the business

does not offer community support, if this lack of pressure would be the cause behind this shortage in support.

Only two participants believed that the owner helped the community because of an external motive, social pressure. The social pressure can also be seen as an influencer towards moral obligation. Card (2005) argued that local retailers might be socially responsible because they consider it the “right thing to do”.

*“I think he suffers the pressure from the community, which helps him to decide to help. I think he gets that push”* (Community Member, Participant 3).

*“I think he certainly suffers some pressure from the community. As I said, I think he's one of the most powerful people here, so people kind of expect him to help. People might think: "Oh, he's not helping, and he could help. So, let's not buy from him anymore. Because even when he's in a position to help, he's not helping.” That's why I don't think it's 100% free and spontaneous the help that he offers”* (Community Member, Participant 2).

The researcher has also questioned the participants about what they think demotivates the owner of the business to support its local community.

Community Member, Participant 2, answered that she believes the business does not get any return from the help it provides, which might be a reason for a reduction or demotivation in being socially responsible.

*“I think it's just because he doesn't get any return at all, you know. I think he had to do everything with his own effort, alone. He grew up in an economically needy region... Maybe even the vision of retaining wealth for him. He might want to be the only successful business in the region”* (Community Member, Participant 2).

Community Member, Participant 4, believes that because the business is managed in the ‘old style’, this can be a reason for the lack of support. The idea that businesses are created to generate profit to their owners only.

*“I think it is because he has an old style of business. He has this company since the old days. He doesn't invest much in upgrades, systems, because it's a local, rural business”* (Community Member, Participant 4).

Considering the second objective, the findings juxtapose with the literature review presented by this study. The enlightened self-interest was identified by the findings as the main motivation for community support, followed by personal rewards and moral obligation.

#### 4.2.3 Third Objective

**To explore what factors can influence the level of community involvement, with regard to business social responsibility actions, of Mercantil Nazareno (Nazareno's Market).**

Moving forward to the next objective, the researcher aimed to understand if the characteristics of the owner, the business and the community could influence the level of community involvement of Mercantil Nazareno.

For the first set of characteristics, the owner's, the participants presented mixed responses.

The respondents were divided when asked if the school level of the owner could influence on the level of support that he was willing to provide. The majority view is that schooling level does not influence the level of support provided.

Table 6: Characteristics of the owner

Participant	School Level	Time in the community
Owner – P1	No	Yes
Community Member – P2	Yes	Indecisive
Community Member – P3	Yes	Yes
Community Member – P4	Yes	Yes
Community Member – P5	Yes	Yes
Community Member – P6	No	No
Employee – P7	No	Yes
Employee – P8	No	Yes
Employee – P9	No	Yes

*“I don't think so. I think it depends on the person. For example, I like to help. And that's regardless of whether or not I have a higher level of schooling. I believe that what counts is the desire in helping those in need, and not if you have a diploma”* (Owner, Participant 1).

*“I don't think so. Because sometimes a person who doesn't have many studies sees more the need of the other and tries to help, than people who have a higher school level”* (Community Member, Participant 6).

Hayghe (1991), Smith (1994), Besser and Miller (2004) argue that education might influence the way the owner sees and helps the community. The findings from this research have gone against what has been presented by the literature.

When asked about the time of residency in the community, the majority view is that the time living in the community does influence the level of support provided towards the local community. Besser (1998) and Besser (2012) argued that longer the owner has been living in the community, the higher is the possibility that they will be more committed to the community. The findings from this research reaffirm what has been presented by the literature

*“He already has roots in the community, so he feels obliged to help. He has been living here for so many years”* (Community Member, Participant 3).

*“I believe that because of his old way of serving the client; of not investing in new systems, of not seeking to study and know the ways he could help to improve the local community and the company. I believe that this does not motivate the owner of the enterprise to help the community more actively”* (Community Member, Participant 4).

Community Member, Participant 2, provided a very different answer. She discussed that the length of time that a person has lived in the community can create both people that might see the problems in this community as longstanding, or people that want change.

*“It can create both good and bad behaviours. It can create people who are comfortable living with it, as well as people who want to change and want to improve the socio-economic level of the community”* (Community Member, participant 2).

Moving on to the next set of characteristics, the business characteristics.

The participants made it clear that the business has developed itself over the years. The researcher has concluded that the view about the size of the business can be divided into two groups. All members of the community believe that the business can be considered as large. The owner and employees, however, still consider it small. Van Auken and Ireland (1982) and Chrisman and Archer (1984) have argued that the bigger the business, the more resources it has, and the bigger will be the expectations of the community around it.



Table 7: Size of Mercantil Nazareno

Participant	Size of Mercantil Nazareno
Owner – P1	Small
Community Member – P2	Large
Community Member – P3	Large
Community Member – P4	Large
Community Member – P5	Large
Community Member – P6	Large
Employee – P7	Small
Employee – P8	Small
Employee – P9	Small

When comparing the findings, it is possible to identify that most of the participants that considered Mercantil Nazareno as a large business suggest that the business does not help the community. This finding also reaffirms what van Auken and Ireland (1982) and Chrisman and Archer (1984) suggested as expectations based on size.

*“I see growth in the market, which used to be this little, and now it's this big. So, when we compare the sizes, we get a basis that there has been growth”* (Community Member, Participant 5).

*“They've grown a lot. It started small and went up. And today they have a lot to offer in the store. They've achieved some nice growth”* (Community Member, Participant 6).

Regarding the topic years of operation, all respondents confirmed that the business has been in the community for a long time. Besser and Miller (2004) argue that the longer the business has been in the community, the higher is the possibility of community involvement.

*“I believe it's been a long time. Since when I was a kid I've heard about the market. So, I believe he's been in the community for at least 20 years”* (Community Member, Participant 2).

The community characteristics are the last element that might or might not influence the level of community involvement.

Table 8: Community as loyal customers

Participant	Community as a loyal customer
Owner – P1	Yes
Community Member – P2	No
Community Member – P3	Yes
Community Member – P4	Yes
Community Member – P5	Yes
Community Member – P6	Yes
Employee – P7	No
Employee – P8	Yes
Employee – P9	Yes

The researcher started the discussion by asking if the members of the community were customers of the Mercantil Nazareno. The response was unanimous. All participants confirmed that the community is a customer, as well as people from the immediate communities around Barra Nova.

*“Look, I will estimate that 90% of the customers are from the community, but the business also serves other communities around”* (Employee, Participant 9).

Regards the loyalty of the customers, most of the participants confirmed that they believed the community was formed of loyal customers.

However, Employee, Participant 7, disagrees.

*“We have several competitors and they are always looking for better prices, and we have often seen our customers going to the competition”* (Employee, Participant 7).

Respondent 9 confirmed that there are other options in the community and that their clients sometimes shop from different markets in the region, but he still considers them as loyal.

*“Even if they have to use the trade or the service of other companies, but they are always here shopping, anyways. Let's say they don't abandon us. Since we are the company they usually buy from”* (Employee, Participant 9).

Community Member, Participant 2, believes that the community is formed by loyal customers. However, she argues that if there was another better option, the customers would definitely migrate to this other business.

*“They end up being loyal consumers because the Mercantil Nazareno is one of the few alternatives. However, I believe that if there was another market, with an owner that helped the community, even more, I believe that this other business would have an even greater loyalty from the customers”* (Community Member, participant 2).

Another characteristic is the size of the community.

Table 9: Size of the community

Participant	Size of the community
Owner – P1	Large
Community Member – P2	Small
Community Member – P3	Small
Community Member – P4	Small
Community Member – P5	Small
Community Member – P6	Small
Employee – P7	Small
Employee – P8	Small
Employee – P9	Small

The owner of Mercantil Nazareno was the only respondent to consider the community as “big”. This reaffirms the literature that says that small business owners feel more motivated to support communities that are small and closely depend on the business than larger communities (Besser, 1999).

The lack of support that has been presented by some community members could be explained by the fact that the owner does not see the community as small, while the members of the same community see it as small and needy of support.

*“There are a lot of people living in the community, and I consider it as big”* (Owner, participant 1).

The last community characteristic that the researcher has presented to the participants was regarding the support that the community was willing to offer to the small businesses inside the community.

Besser (1998) argued that if the community is known for being supportive of local businesses, business owners will be more likely to support the community back. The findings have shown that the majority of the participants believe that the community is supportive of local businesses.

Most of the respondents focused on communication to protect small businesses against violence from outsiders. The Mercantil Nazareno has suffered from assaults in the past, and this communication with the members of the community has been constantly presented as a way the community can return the support that the local businesses provide.

*“In the case of violence, they can, in a certain way, intimidate the action of the people who come from outside... I believe that if there is a threat from outside, the community residents might warn us”* (Employee, Participant 8).

Community Member, Participant 3 and Participant 6 also highlighted that the community is primarily of producers and farmers. They produce fruits and vegetables that the businesses in the community can buy from, for better prices.

*“They produce for the Mercantil Nazareno to buy, and they also buy from the Mercantil Nazareno afterwards”* (Community Member, Participant 3).

*“I think the community help by producing products that local businesses need... the community also produces fruits for commerce... Not to mention it's much more accessible”* (Community Member, Participant 6).

Community Member, Participant 4, argued that the community can also give back as being loyal customers, ambassadors of the business and so on.

*“The community can give back by visiting the shop more, buying more, advertising the business”* (Community Member, Participant 4).

Community Member, participant 2, argues that she does not believe that the community is supportive.

*“I think it's just because he doesn't get any return at all, you know. I think he had to do everything with his own effort, alone”* (Community Member, participant 2).

#### 4.2.4 Fourth Objective

**To assess if the perceived business success of Mercantil Nazareno (Nazareno's Market) can be associated with its socially responsible practices (if any).**

To assess the perception of business success it is necessary to understand what made the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno start his own business.

Table 10: Motivation to be an entrepreneur

Participant	Motivation to be an entrepreneur
Owner – P1	Be the own boss
Community Member – P2	Job opportunity
Community Member – P3	Job opportunity
Community Member – P4	Job opportunity
Community Member – P5	Job opportunity
Community Member – P6	Job opportunity
Employee – P7	Necessity
Employee – P8	Job opportunity and necessity
Employee – P9	Necessity

The owner of the business affirmed that not having a boss and retaining autonomy were the main reasons why he decided to be an entrepreneur.

*“What motivated me was the fact that being a boss is better than being an employee. The autonomy of being my own boss was my motivation. Not having someone tell me what to do”* (Owner, participant 1).

The researcher has also questioned the other participants about what they assumed was the main motivation for Nazareno to open his business.

The answers ranged from the necessity to the vision of possible success.

*“I believe it is for necessity. Entrepreneurship for necessity... It was something he needed to survive, to make a living, to support his family”* (Employee, Participant 7).

*“I think he saw a niche market... I believe he saw the opportunity to do business and develop financially in his own region. Helping his own family, and so on”* (Community Member, Participant 2).

The findings have reaffirmed that literature that suggested that there are two different motivations to become an entrepreneur: By being “pulled” or “pushed” (Brodie and Stanworth, 1998). The main motivation presented by the owner has been “pull” , because it was intrinsic and positive (Birley and Westhead, 1994; Burke *et al.*, 2002; Benzing and Chu, 2009).

When the researcher asked the participants what they consider to be a successful business, the answers were similar in meaning. First, the participants argued about financial and non-financial ways to measure if a business is successful or not, as it was presented by Walker and Brown (2016). They argued about the increase in the number of customers, high profits, happy employees, and a better lifestyle for the owner and its family.

*“A company is successful if the owner is careful and will always be inside of his own business. You have to be careful not to make people unhappy. A company that honours commitments with customers, suppliers and employees”* (Owner, participant 1).

The response of the owner reaffirms what has been presented by the literature. Luk (1996) argues that owners’ satisfaction regarding the business, independent of its financial position, is considered to be the major measure of business success for SMEs. Murphy *et al.* (1996) added to the knowledge by arguing that “hard work and commitment” to the business can also be seen as a business success to SMEs.

*“A successful business is when you get a return from the customer. The client is satisfied. He returns, he praises you, he encourages you... But we cannot forget the profits as well”* (Community Member, Participant 3).

*“A successful business is a business that is constantly developing. There is no point in being successful today and tomorrow come another business and run over your business”* (Community Member, Participant 2).

When the participants were asked if they consider the Mercantil Nazareno as a successful business, the majority of the participants believed Mercantil Nazareno is successful. Respondent 2, however, was reluctant about her answer. She agrees that the business is

successful in the community of Barra Nova, but that if it was in another region, it might not be considered a successful company.

*“For the region where the business is located, I would say so. However, if we put this company elsewhere, in a more developed environment, I would say that he is not successful. He is geographically successful, but the lacks in development, such as bringing new technologies, and so on”* (Community Member, participant 2).

Next, the researcher aimed to understand if the participants believed if there was a connection between being socially responsible and being successful. The majority view argued that there is a positive relationship between perceived business success and socially responsible practices. Two respondents, however, argued that they do not see a clear link between the points.

*“I don't think it's very connected. It does help, of course, it helps a bit, but there are so many companies out there that don't do anything for the communities, but they are still successful”* (Community Member, Participant 6).

*“I don't necessarily see a connection. I think it can influence positively, of course, but I don't think it necessarily is linked to success. I don't think that just because the companies promote social actions, I don't think it directly influences the issue of company success. It can help, like marketing, but I don't see any other link beyond that”* (Employee, Participant 9).

The literature about this relationship has also been presented as inconclusive. Waddock and Graves (1997), Hillman and Keim (2001), Margolis and Walsh (2003), Orlitzky et al. (2003) and others have argued that there is a positive relationship between perceived business success and socially responsible practices. However, it is also presented by the literature that neutral or even negative results can be found from the relationship between business success and BSR (Aupperle et al., 1985; McGuire et al., 1988; Fonseca and Ferro, 2016).

The researcher has also questioned the participants about their vision regarding companies that are considered successful, but that are not actively responsible. The response was unanimous. All the participants agreed that companies can still be successful, even though they are not being actively responsible, but it might cause the company to have a short life or be seen as not good for the society in the long term.

*“I think they're companies that may fail in the future. Because companies today have social responsibilities”* (Community Member, Participant 2).

*“Those companies that are successful, but have no social responsibility, is like I said. People have to go, they have to consume there, because there is no other place to go. However, if they had options, I am sure they would leave those companies behind”* (Community Member, Participant 4).

Based on the answers, it is possible to see a connection between being successful and being socially responsible. However, a company that is not socially responsible can also be successful. In other words, those two factors do not have to be present at the same time for a company to be perceived as successful. In conclusion, the relationship between being successful and being socially responsible has been found inconclusive.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

In this chapter the author presented and discussed the findings of the primary data generated from semi-structured interviews. The interviews were designed to obtain insights from the perception of three different groups that could be affected by business social responsibility practices: owner (business), employees of the business and members of the community where the business is located.

The findings were interpreted in relation to the research objectives with observations made based on the data collected. The majority of findings reaffirmed the literature presented by this research, but the school level of the owner.

The finding related to the education of the owner has suggested that it does not influence on the level of involvement towards the local community as it has been presented by the researcher in the literature review chapter.

The findings also reaffirmed that in Latin America, business social responsibility is deeply associated with the values of the owner/manager and their family (Gupta *et al.*, 2008). Also, Latin America owners still have strong religious beliefs, what motivates, even more, the support of the needy (Cruz, 2020).

The research findings have also stressed that the vision from the owner and the employees of an SME might differ from the vision from the members of the community where this enterprise is located.

In short, even though some of the findings were inconclusive, it can be understood that there is a lack of understanding of what business social responsibility really is and/or how it can be used for the development of the local communities and the local businesses.



To conclude, most of the findings presented here reaffirmed what has been presented by the literature about the topic. It is possible to see that small and micro enterprises and communities from developing countries differ from large enterprises and communities from developed countries. In other words, the theory of social responsibility from developed and large corporations is not suitable for SME from developing countries (Goss, 1991; Jenkins, 2004; Spence, 2000, 2004; Vyakarnam et al., 1997; Wilson, 1980; Moore and Spence, 2006).

## **5 Concluding Thoughts on the Contribution of this Research, its Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

In this final chapter, a summary of the findings was made, including the limitations that existed during the research process. Here, the researcher has also included suggestions for further research and recommendations which may be considered by other researchers when studying business social responsibility practices towards local community.

### **5.1 Summary of findings**

Regarding the first research objective, to investigate if Mercantil Nazareno (Nazareno's supermarket), a Brazilian SME, supports its local community with business social responsibility actions, the findings from the primary data have shown that most of the members of the community do not recognise the support provided by the Mercantil Nazareno as being socially responsible.

Regarding the second research objective, to identify what motivates Mercantil Nazareno to support its local community with business social responsibility actions, the findings juxtapose the findings presented by Besser and Miller (2004), Besser (1998) and other authors. The findings from the primary data have shown that enlightened self-interest was identified as the main motivation for community support, followed by personal rewards and moral obligations.

The third research objective was to explore what factors can influence the level of community involvement, with regard to business social responsibility actions, of Mercantil Nazareno. The researcher divided the analysis into three characteristics: owner, business and community. The findings from the primary data about the characteristics of the business and community have reaffirmed the literature as influencers to community support (Kilkenny *et al.*, 1999; Besser, 1999; Besser, 2012). The characteristics of the owner, however, presented a contrast. The findings have reaffirmed that time of residency as an influencer to the community support, but the findings about education level have been inconclusive.

In relation to the fourth research objective, to assess if the perceived business success of Mercantil Nazareno can be associated with its socially responsible practices (if any).

Regarding the linkage between success and being socially responsible, the majority view in the findings argued that the perception of success is related to being socially responsible. Yet, some participants disagree with this view. Overall, this finding reaffirmed that literature that has presented this relationship as being inconclusive (Orlitzky et al., 2003; Aupperle et al., 1985; McGuire et al., 1988).

## **5.2 Implications of Findings for the Research Questions**

The findings derived from the data generated by the primary data highlighted some interesting differences from the literature review of this study.

The findings from the primary data have shown that the business has never advertised the support it provided. It is possible to conclude from the findings that, even though the community of Barra Nova is small, the knowledge about the business's socially actions have been restricted to people that have received the support or that have offered the support, making the rest of the community unaware of it.

It is important to highlight that all employees are also members of the community and that none of the members of the community selected to participate in the study have ever worked to the business.

The findings predominately indicate that the motivation to support the community was intrinsic, but that the owner also had the understanding that by helping the community, he would also be helping the business itself.

From the findings, is also possible to conclude that the characteristics of the owner, the business and the community can influence the support provided and how the support is perceived. It is evident from the primary data that business social responsibility may have an impact on the perception of the business success of the company in the study. It was also presented by the findings that the participants believed a company that is socially responsible will have a sustained and continued success over the years.

## **5.3 Contributions and Limitations of the Research**

The main contribution of this research is to potentially offer a guide to owners/managers and members of the community in Brazil who own small and micro businesses to

understand what business social responsibility really is, and what can be really expected from it.

The researcher recognises that this study has been done over a very small sample size and that generalisations will not be possible. Yet, the author hopes that this study will contribute to the knowledge of business social responsibility of small and micro businesses by presenting that a small business can be socially responsible, can get a return from its community and can be considered as successful.

One of the findings of this research is that the participants used their own perception of business size to ponder their expectations towards the businesses. From the findings, it was possible to conclude that the owner of Mercantil Nazareno believed that he was providing the support he was able to, based on the size and financial position of his business (small business). On the other hand, most of the members of the community were unhappy based on the expectation of support that they desired. All members of the community that participated in the research considered Mercantil Nazareno as the largest business in the region.

This research presents some limitations. First of all, the research has been built upon data gathered from a relatively small number of participants (nine respondents) compared to the actual number of residents of the community. Participant 3, member of the community, described the community as having around 1,000 families. A large sample of participants would be suggested for a deeper analysis of their perceptions.

Also, the members of the community were selected by the use of social media, Facebook. This method has been presented as a limitation in the methodology chapter. People that are not part of the network did not have the opportunity to be selected. The researcher, however, had no other option, since travel to the community of Barra Nova were not authorized because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, due to time constraints for submission of this dissertation, the researcher had limited time for data collection.

This research does have its limitations, but the researcher believes that the findings offer a suitable groundwork for future research. The data generated from the primary research suggests that the literature needs to be greater around what motivates and what might

influence the motivation of owners/managers to support its local community in Latin America, and more specifically, in the northeast of Brazil.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for Future Research**

While recognising the limitations of this study, the researcher believes that the objectives of the study were largely attained.

Future research would benefit from incorporating a mixed methods research approach and combining qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative approach would highlight the perceptions of the participants, and the quantitative approach would allow the findings to be generalised.

Research using multiple case studies of companies in the same industry would also provide much broader insights into the perceptions of business success and the business social responsibilities of small and micro enterprises in Latin America, and more specifically, in Brazil.

Future studies are advised to look into other characteristics of the owner that have not been addressed here, such as family background and religion (Gupta et al., 2008; Cruz, 2020).

Further research is also advised to learn more about the relationship between business social responsibility and the perception of business success of owners and members of the community, since this relationship has been presented by the literature as inconclusive (Orlitzky et al., 2003; Aupperle et al., 1985; McGuire et al., 1988).

This research started to examine the business social responsibility of small and micro enterprises in the northeast of Brazil, but there is an opportunity to revisit that theme in more detail by studying companies from different parts of Brazil, which might bring different findings since Brazil is such a vast and large country.

#### **5.5 Final Conclusion and Reflections**

The researcher is hopeful that the findings of this research will offer a new angle to the owner of Mercantil Nazareno to analyse how he sees and supports its local community, and how the community perceive the support provided by the business. Yet, the researcher

is aware that changes will not happen overnight. Nevertheless, the researcher is optimistic that it might bring some understanding about business social responsibility to this region of Brazil where the private sector is of extremal importance to help people in need, since the Government is not as present as it could be.

The researcher considers the fact that the owner of a micro business from a small community, in the northeast of Brazil, agreed to take part in a study that focuses on social responsibility as the first step towards the betterment of the local community and the small businesses inside this community.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A - Informed Consent Form (English version)



GRIFFITH COLLEGE DUBLIN

Griffith College GBS

Informed Consent Form

The research title is Business social responsibility of small and micro businesses: A case study of a Brazilian micro food retailer. The researcher is a student from Griffith College Dublin, and the university department responsible for the research is the Graduate Business School. There is only one investigator in this study. The name of the Researcher is Raquel Silva Campos, student number 3017139, student of the MSc International Business Management.

The purpose of the research it is to contribute to the literature about the relationship of small businesses and their local communities, as well to the understanding of Business Social Responsibility of small business in developing countries, by the use of a case study.

Interviews of the owner of the business selected for the case study, employees, and members of the local community will be used for this research. Said interviews will be recorded and the transcriptions of those interviews will be made. The estimated time of commitment for the interviews is of about one hour per interview. There are no risks to participants from involvement in this research. Participants may withdraw from the Research Study at any point.

Participant – please complete the following (Circle Yes or No for each question)

<i>I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me)</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>
<i>I understand the information provided</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>
<i>I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>
<i>I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>
<i>I am aware that my interview will be recorded</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>
<i>I am aware that a transcription of my interview will be made</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>
<i>I may aware that I can withdraw from the Research Study at any point</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>
<i>I am aware that all data here provided will only be used for academic purposes only</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>
<i>I am aware that my real name will not be disclosure in the study</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>

I am aware that my identity will be kept confidential and that the data collected will only the used for academic purposes only. I am also aware that the access to this data will only be possible to the researcher and to the university when assessing the process, and that the data will be destroyed within a period of one month after the approval and successful completion of the dissertation.

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researchers, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project

Participants Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name in Block Capitals: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B – Informed consent form (Portuguese Version)



Griffith College Dublin

Griffith College GBS

Formulário de Consentimento

O título dessa pesquisa é “A percepção do sucesso de uma empresa e o suporte oferecido para a comunidade local. Um estudo de caso de uma microempresa em uma pequena cidade do interior do Nordeste, no Brasil. A pesquisadora é aluna do curso de mestrado em “International Business Management”, pela Griffith College, em Dublin, na Irlanda. O nome da pesquisadora é Raquel Silva Campos.

Entrevistas serão feitas com o proprietário da empresa selecionada para o estudo de caso, funcionários dessa empresa e membros da comunidade local. Essas entrevistas serão gravadas e serão traduzidas para o inglês. O tempo de duração estimado para cada entrevista será em torno de 1 hora. Não existe nenhum tipo de risco físico ou psicológico para os participantes envolvidos na pesquisa. O participante pode pedir para não continuar com a pesquisa a qualquer momento.

Essa pesquisa irá contribuir para o entendimento da relação entre comunidade local e micro e pequenas empresas, focando especificamente no Nordeste do Brasil. Essa pesquisa tem o objetivo de trazer mais racionalidade para as decisões de donos de pequenos negócios. Muitas vezes essas decisões são tomadas com base apenas em especulações. Espero que essa pesquisa também traga benefícios para a comunidade local.

Participante – Por favor, circule sim ou não em cada resposta

*Eu li a “Declaração de linguagem simples*

*Sim/Não*

*Eu entendi a informação presente no formulário*

*Sim/Não*

*Eu tive a oportunidade de fazer perguntas sobre o tema*

*Sim/Não*

*Eu recebi respostas para as minhas perguntas*

*Sim/Não*

*Eu estou ciente de que a entrevista será gravada*

*Sim/Não*

*Eu estou ciente de que minha entrevista será traduzida para o inglês e transcrita*

*Sim/Não*

*Eu estou ciente de que posso sair do estudo a qualquer momento*

*Sim/Não*

*Eu estou ciente de que todas as informações do estudo serão usadas apenas para fins acadêmicos*

*Sim/Não*

*Eu estou ciente de que meu nome não será utilizado no estudo*

*Sim/Não*

Eu estou ciente de que minha identidade será mantida confidencial e que toda a informação coletada pela pesquisadora será utilizada apenas nesse estudo. Eu estou ciente de que qualquer informação coletada por meio das entrevistas será acessada apenas pela pesquisadora e pelos professores, quando estiverem fazendo a análise do estudo. Por fim, eu estou ciente de que qualquer dado coletado será destruído em até um mês depois da defesa dessa tese.

Eu li e entendi todas as informações presentes nesse formulário. Minhas dúvidas foram respondidas pela pesquisadora. Por fim, eu aceito fazer parte desse projeto de pesquisa acadêmica.

Participante Assinatura: \_\_\_\_\_ Data: \_\_\_\_\_

Nome em letra de forma: \_\_\_\_\_

Testemunha: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C – Plain Language Statement form (English Version)



### Griffith College GBS Plain Language Statement

The research title is Business social responsibility of small and micro businesses: A case study of a Brazilian micro food retailer. The researcher is a student from Griffith College Dublin, and the university department responsible for the research is the Graduate Business School. There is only one investigator in this study. The name of the Researcher is Raquel Silva Campos, student number 3017139, student of the MSc International Business Management.

Interviews of the owner of the business selected for the case study, employees, and members of the local community will be used for this research. Said interviews will be recorded and the transcriptions of those interviews will be made. The estimated time of commitment for the interviews is of about one hour per interview. There are no risks to participants from involvement in this research. Participants may withdraw from the Research Study at any point.

The questions for the interview will be around the following themes:

- Business owner community identity
- Business and community relationship and the importance of the business for local development
- Business attitudes toward local economic development processes.
- Perception of success and its measurements (if any).

This study will contribute to the literature about the relationship of small businesses and their local communities, as well to the understanding of Business Social Responsibility of small business in developing countries. My research intends to lead business owners to leverage the knowledge provided by this work to develop or improve their actions. I also hope that indirect benefits of the research will be transferred to the community as well.

The identity of the participants will be kept confidential. The data collected will only be used for academic purposes only. Access to this data will only be possible to the researcher and to the university when assessing the process. The data will be destroyed within a period of one month after the approval and successful completion of the dissertation.

All the interviews will be done online, and the names of participants will be kept in anonymity. None of the participants will know who else is being interviewed. I am the only person who will know the identities of the participants, but I assure that they will always be kept private.

If participants have concerns about this study, please contact me on [raquel.silvacampos@student.griffith.ie](mailto:raquel.silvacampos@student.griffith.ie). If you wish to contact an independent person.

Please contact: Dr. Garrett Ryan, Griffith College Research Ethics Committee

South Circular Road, Dublin 8, Ireland, Mail: [garrett.ryan@griffith.ie](mailto:garrett.ryan@griffith.ie), Tel: +353 1 4163324

## Appendix D - Plain Language Statement form (Portuguese Version)



### Griffith College GBS Declaração de Linguagem Simples

O título dessa pesquisa é “A percepção do sucesso de uma empresa e o suporte oferecido para a comunidade local. Um estudo de caso de uma microempresa em uma pequena cidade do interior do Nordeste, no Brasil. A pesquisadora é aluna do curso de mestrado em “International Business Management”, pela Griffith College, em Dublin, na Irlanda. O nome da pesquisadora é Raquel Silva Campos

Entrevistas serão feitas com o proprietário da empresa selecionada para o estudo de caso, funcionários dessa empresa e membros da comunidade local. Essas entrevistas serão gravadas e serão traduzidas para o inglês. O tempo de duração estimado para cada entrevista será em torno de 1 hora. Não existe nenhum tipo de risco físico ou psicológico para os participantes envolvidos na pesquisa. O participante pode pedir para não continuar com a pesquisa a qualquer momento.

As perguntas para a entrevista irão ser sobre os seguintes temas:

- Responsabilidade social das empresas
- Motivadores para auxiliar a comunidade
- Percepção do sucesso das empresas

Essa pesquisa irá contribuir para o entendimento da relação entre comunidade local e micro e pequenas empresas, focando especificamente no Nordeste do Brasil. Essa pesquisa tem o objetivo de trazer mais racionalidade para as decisões de donos de pequenos negócios. Muitas vezes essas decisões são tomadas com base apenas em especulações. Espero que essa pesquisa também traga benefícios para a comunidade local.

A identidade dos participantes será mantida confidencial. As informações coletadas para esse estudo serão utilizadas apenas para fins acadêmicos. Além da pesquisadora, apenas os professores da Griffith College terão acesso as gravações das entrevistas. Qualquer informação coletada para esse estudo será destruída em um período de até um mês depois da defesa dessa tese.

Todas as entrevistas serão realizadas online e todos os nomes de todos os participantes serão mantidos confidenciais. Nenhum dos participantes saberá quais outras pessoas também fazem parte da pesquisa. A pesquisadora será a única pessoa que terá acesso aos nomes de todos os participantes.

Em caso de dúvidas sobre a finalidade do estudo, por favor, entrar em contato comigo pelo e-mail [raquel.silvacampos@student.griffith.ie](mailto:raquel.silvacampos@student.griffith.ie). Caso haja a necessidade de falar com uma pessoa independente, por favor entrar em contato com Dr. Garrett Ryan, Griffith College

Research Ethics Committee

South Circular Road, Dublin 8, Ireland, Mail: [garrett.ryan@griffith.ie](mailto:garrett.ryan@griffith.ie), Tel: +353 1 4163324.

## Appendix E - Interviews

### Interview with Owner of the Mercantil Nazareno – Participant 1

1- What do you like best about having your own business?

What I like most is to be in contact with people on a daily basis. That's very important to me. To get to know the people that come and go from my business

2- Could you describe what your business is like?

We have 2 employees who are fixed, and the others work as needed. As far as I know, there are 11 employees. The company is in the business of trade. I sell everything from food to construction material. We're a market, a commerce.

3- Have you ever heard of the term business social responsibility?

Yes, I have.

4- What do you understand about this term?

The responsibility of companies is to take care of the environment, to help people in need, things like that.

5- Do you consider yourself responsible for the local community, through your company?

No, I do not feel responsible. The government is the one that is really responsible. The company is not responsible for community development. We help because of common sense, but we are not responsible for the growth of the community.

6- What is your opinion about the following sentence: Improving the community is an exclusive obligation of the government!

Yes, of course. I agree with this sentence. We select the politicians and they should support us back.

7- Are your suppliers from the community or do they come from outside?

My suppliers come from outside.

8- What motivates you to buy from outside the community?

It's because in the community you don't have the basic things you need, right? It comes from outside and I'm responsible for meeting the needs of the community. I am the place where people go when they need to buy something.

9- Have you helped the community in any way, through your company?

Absolutely. I have, yes. For example, people who are temporarily unable to work, I help them with food baskets, or even if they need medicine or financial support to pay the electric bill. I also helped with community parties, church parties, and so on. When someone comes to ask us to sponsor or collaborate with some activity, I collaborate. I like to be part of those activities.

10- Have you ever publicized the support you offer to the community?

No, I have not. I have never disclosed them. I have never disclosed them because I did not think it is necessary. I think that the really important thing is to have the desire to help and I do not tell other people. I help because I want.

11- Have you ever had a negative response from these helpings that you have made?

No, not at all. Just positive. People thank me verbally.

12- Do you think there could be other kinds of actions that you could do, but that you haven't done for some reason?

No, I don't think so. I help in the way I can, but I cannot just come around and give everything for free. I have a business to run.

13- What motivates you to help the community?

I'm motivated to meet the need of a person who needs help; to help an event to be completed, those things.



14- Is there anything that personally demotivates you, that makes you not want to help?

No. Usually nothing demotivates me. Usually, I get motivated to help the people who I know needs it the most.

15- Do you think a company can be considered successful within the community, even if it does not help the development of that community?

Yes, but I am sure that when the company helps in the development of the community it can be much more successful than if it did not help.

16- When you help, what does it feel like?

It makes me feel happy.

17- Do you help the community because it's the right thing to do or because of social pressure?

No. I help because I think it's the right thing to do. It's my thing. I like helping people who need it. I think it's for the best feeling to see someone happy because of something I did.

18- Do you think that by helping the community, you're also helping the company itself to grow?

Yes... in a way, yes. I think that, by doing that, the company looks good. People will talk about it. Then, we'll certainly have better success.

19- What are the returns you see from the community when you help?

They thank me. When I help, people come here and thank me verbally. They wish me well. They wish success for me, my family and my company.

20- Do you have any way to measure that return?

No. People say thank you and that's it.

21- What is your school level?

I have the third grade of fundamental education.

22- Do you think your school level can influence how you look and help the community of Barra Nova?

I don't think so. I think it depends on the person. For example, I like to help. And that's regardless of whether or not I have a higher level of schooling. I believe that what counts is the desire in helping those in need, and not if you have a diploma.

23- How long have you lived in the community of Barra Nova?

It's been living here for the last 26 years.

24- Do you think that because you've been living in this community for so long, it motivates you to help people more?

Absolutely. I consider myself a member of the community. So, I like to do good for the people in my community. And by doing good for the community, we always see the return.

25- Do you know most people in the community by name?

Yes, I do. I know most of the people in my community by name.

26- Do you think that by having this more personal knowledge of people, it also motivates you to help?

Yes, it certainly does. They are my friends.

27- How would you describe your community?

There are a lot of people living in the community, and I consider it as big.

28- Is the community far from the metropolitan region of Fortaleza or is it close by?

It's a bit far, yes. I would say, around 100 kilometres.

29- Do you think the people in the community are loyal customers of your company?

Yes, they are. Because they're always buying from us. The people in the community help us to make it work. They have helped since the beginning.

30- Do you think people in the community care about the future of the Mercantil Nazareno?

Of course! They think it's good to have a business close to them. It's a business that helps the whole community. So, I believe that they want us to grow, so that we can help them too. So, we can have more options and better prices.

31- In what ways do you think the community could repay the help you give?

Just thanking verbally to me is already enough. They are already good customers.

32- Have you ever suffered from local violence?

Yes, I have. And I think it was a mix between people from the community and people from outside. I think that based on how the action happened, you know.

33- Did those robberies happen recently?

No! They happened a few years ago.

34- Do you think that the community protects the small businesses that are inside of the community?

I think they do. They protect us by communicating in case there's something suspicious going on in the region. If they see people who are not known in the area, they let us know. Because there are people who are suspected of being bad people. They'll let us know.

35- Just to confirm. The community helps with this communication issue, to protect the companies.

Yes! And also, by buying from us. They help in both ways, I think.

36- What motivated you to open your own business?

What motivated me was the fact that being a boss is better than being an employee. The autonomy of being my own boss was my motivation. Not having someone tell me what to do.

37- In your opinion, what makes a company successful?

A company is successful if the owner is careful and will always be inside of his own business. You have to be careful not to make people unhappy. A company that honours commitments with customers, suppliers and employees. I believe that it is a successful company.

38- Do you consider your business successful?

I do. Because I think I have enough customers. I think I have a good income. I'm satisfied with my income. I can take care of my family. I did not study much, but I can pay for my kids to go to school. All those things.

39- Aside from profit, do you measure success in any other way?

No. We usually use profit, because it's the easiest way to see it. If I make a profit, it's because it's working. Well... I also consider having clients who always come back. If the clients are always with us, that means we are successful.

40- What do you think of the following sentence: The growth of the community can be used to measure the growth of companies within the community!

Absolutely. When the community grows and develops, the companies within the community will also gain from it. And when the businesses develop themselves, the community will enjoy it as well.

41- Do you think that the success of the Mercantil Nazareno can be connected to the social activities that you offer?

Yes. It can be connected. Because in the same way I help people, people help me too. So, I see that my success depends on the success of the people around me.

42- What do you think of companies that people consider successful, but that don't have any kind of social responsibility towards the local communities?

I don't think they are well seen by the community. It is better when the company sees that they can help people around them. By doing that, then they grow together. As I said, the business needs the community and the community need the business.

## Interview with Community Member – Participant 2

1- Have you ever heard of the term business social responsibility?

Yes, I have heard, but in a very superficial way, about companies helping the community in a certain way. For me, business social responsibility is related to that. I don't know if this is correct, but it is my vision of business social responsibility.

2- Do you know the Mercantil Nazareno?

Yes, I do. He's well known here in the community.

3- Do you think that the Mercantil Nazareno is important for the development of the community of Barra Nova?

I consider it important because it is the only slightly bigger market here in the region. So, suppose there was no Mercantil Nazareno, we would have to travel a very long distance to buy the basic inputs for everyday life. So, the Mercantil Nazareno does influence the region, and not only for that, but also economically, by generating jobs for the community, for example.

4- Who do you think should be responsible for the development of the community?

I think that the local businessmen should be part and assume this responsibility. Also, the local government, with projects, with incentives for the businesses. Because the owners of the small businesses also deserve to have the incentive of the government to help the community, in my vision.

5- What is your opinion on the following sentence: Improving the community is an exclusive obligation of the government!

It is not an exclusive obligation of the government. I believe that the government, without the help of the population, the community, the participants, the members of the community cannot do anything alone. It has to be a partnership. We need the support of the government, but then it also has to have the collaboration of the population, the small businessmen, the micro-businesses and so on.

6- Do you know if the Mercantil Nazareno has helped the community in any way?

So, besides employing some people of the community... besides helping to produce some income in the region, he has helped very punctually on some commemorative dates. Let's say, children's day, a local church event. It might not be too big of a thing, but I consider it as help because other businesses might not even do that.

7- Do you know if the Mercantil Nazareno has helped families financially?

No. If he has, I don't know. I don't know if he has ever helped in the financial sense...

8- And concerning these supports that he made for the churches, do you know if he divulged these aids?

I believe that always when there is this kind of event here, it is said at the event: this here was sponsored by this company, this here was donated from another company. So, I think the only advertisement was this one. The owner of the Mercantil Nazareno usually does not talk much about what he does.

9- Have you ever been beneficiated from the actions of the Mercantil Nazareno?

As a consumer, yeah. As I said... Since it is the only bigger commerce in the region, he ends up helping out with eventual needs, like, I need a specific input, I end up going to his market because it is the closest. It's kind of real help. So, I consider myself beneficiated as a user. If I didn't have it, I might have to go a lot further to buy a basic need, like rice, beans, whatever.

10- What do you think the Mercantil Nazareno could do for the community, but what doesn't he do?

I think he could have, let's suppose, promotion near the expiration date of the products. Also, he could employ more people from the community. By doing that, he would help to grow the region even more. Because the local economy would end up running a lot more, right? It would make the people from the community to develop more and more, and it would stop being composed by such needy people and so on. I think he could do that.

Make some kind of donation too. Some projects! Since he is a person who has many possessions. A social project here for the community. That would help a lot. But I agree that he would have to have some incentives. Businessmen, in general, tend to do these kinds of things when they are beneficiated in some way. A tax incentive, a financial incentive, government support, a local councilman's support, anyway. I think he would have to have some outer motivates, and not just the desire to help and a good heart.

11- Do you think a company can be successful without helping the local community?

No. Because the local community is primarily the one that makes the local economy go around. I believe that for a company to be successful and reach higher levels, it has to first be successful locally, and then it starts to reach new places. So, I believe it has to grow locally first and then broaden its horizons.

12- What do you think motivates entrepreneurs, in general, to help local communities?

It's like I said... tax incentives, tax breaks, assistance in the region. These are things that would facilitate. It would be one helping the other, and it would generate those benefits for both the community and the small business owner.

13- What do you think discourages the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno, since he does not help so much?

I think it's just because he doesn't get any return at all, you know. I think he had to do everything with his own effort, alone. He grew up in an economically needy region. A region that doesn't have such a good economy, and I believe he didn't have much government help, either. He had to work a lot for it, even if it doesn't justify it, but I think that's what discouraged him from helping the community less. Maybe even the vision of retaining wealth for him. He might want to be the only successful business in the region. That could be it, too. Who knows?

14- You said that sometimes the owner of Mercantil Nazareno helps the community on commemorative dates. What do you think motivates him to do these things? Is it because he thinks it's the right thing to do or because he suffers the pressure from the local community?

I think he certainly suffers some pressure from the community. As I said, I think he's one of the most powerful people here, so people kind of expect him to help. People might think: "Oh, he's not helping and he could help. So, let's not buy from him anymore. Because even when he's in a position to help, he's not helping." That's why I don't think it's 100% free and spontaneous the help that he offers.

15- Just to confirm... you think he helps the community to avoid a future community boycott?

Exactly, and even to avoid that the community ends up buying from other smaller markets or ends up going more to the nearest city, leaving the local community.

16- What do you think about the following sentence: The owner of the Mercantil Nazareno helps the community because it helps the business itself



I think that when he helps the community, by employing someone, I believe he helps the community by helping his own business because that would make the community's economy spin a little bit. He gives a job to someone, that person gets an income, that income ends up going back to him the business because the employee also needs to buy food and so on. So, yes, I agree with the sentence.

17- What's your school level?

I have a bachelor's degree.

18- Do you think that a person's school level can influence the way they look at the local community?

Absolutely. A person who is growing in the level of study knows a little more local, he has a desire to develop the community a little more. She has a desire to grow, and with that to make the local community grow as well.

19- Do you think that the school level of the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno can influence the help that he is willing to offer?

I don't know his exact level of education. I believe he has got only primary schooling. He doesn't even have a high school. I don't know what the level of schooling is like there in Ireland, but here we have the elementary, the fundamental, the middle and the superior. And I think he hasn't finished the fundamental. So, he doesn't have such a specialized view on business or community development. So, I think that does have an influence.

20- How long have you lived in this community?

For over 20 years.

21- Do you think that the time a person lives in the same community can influence the level of support they are willing to offer?

It can. It can generate both good and bad behaviours. It can generate people who are comfortable living with it, as well as people who want to change and want to improve the socio-economic level of the community. Anyway, I see that it has those two aspects. I, for example, want the community to grow.

22- Do you know how long the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno has been living in the community?

I believe it's been a long time. Since when I was a kid I've heard about the market. So, I believe he's been in the community for at least 20 years. I'm not sure that's exactly right.

23- Do you know if the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno has ties of friendship with the people of the community?

I believe he has ties of friendship. Not to mention that a large part of the family must also live in the region.

24- What do you think is discouraging, since he has lived in the community for so long and has contact with the locals? Why do you think he doesn't get motivated and get more involved in helping the local community?

Maybe it's because he's trying to retain his wealth, really. To be the most successful person in the community. To be the biggest entrepreneur in the region, and so on.

25- You're a customer of the Mercantil Nazareno?

Yes, I am a client. I go there weekly or fortnightly. I always buy one thing and another.

26- What motivated you to be a client there?

Geographical distance, to be honest! That's the closest market to my residence. The prices are not too different from the prices we find in the biggest supermarket in the nearby town, Redenção. Then it's an easy thing to do. That motivated me to become a customer.

27- Do you know if most of the customers of the Mercantil Nazareno come from the community or they come from outside?

Most come from the community or nearby communities. No people come from outside or far away to buy from them.

28- Why do you think that even though the community is his friend, and the community is his customer, why is he so discouraged from helping?

Maybe because he doesn't know any projects or doesn't know the benefits that helping the community could bring to his business. I think it might have something to do with it.

29- Do you think the people in the community are loyal consumers of the Mercantil Nazareno?

They end up being loyal consumers because the Mercantil Nazareno is one of the few alternatives. However, I believe that if there was another market, with an owner that helped the community, even more, I believe that this other business would have an even greater loyalty from the customers.

30- Do you think the people in the community care about the future of the enterprise?

I don't think so. I don't think anyone cares much about it. They just want to enjoy the company, meet the daily, monthly needs, but they don't care about the future of the company. I think this because the business is not something that is really benefiting the community that much. So, I don't think the residents are concerned about the company.

31- Do you know if the Mercantil Nazareno has ever suffered from local violence?

I believe he has suffered assault, but I won't be able to give the exact date. But I think he's been robbed. I think he's been robbed a few times.

32- Do you know if the people who were robbed were community members or came from outside?

I do not know precisely

33- What do you think the community could give as a return to the Mercantil Nazareno social responsibility activities?

I think by finalizing purchases, trying to further promote the market, to further promote the local economy. Maybe by stop buying from larger supermarkets in the neighbouring city. I believe that promoting local consumption itself, to help even more the Mercantil Nazareno and the community itself.

34- Do you think the community protects the small businesses it has within the community, in some way?

I think people in the community help by buying from small businesses, but I think that's the only way they think they can protect the local businesses. It's because they're people who don't have so much market vision, you know. Most of them are people with low schooling. Few are the people who have a slightly higher schooling level.

35- What does a successful business mean to you?

A successful business is a business that is constantly developing. There is no point in being successful today and tomorrow come another business and run over your business. So, I believe that a good business is one that is constantly developing. That promotes local benefits. That increases the economy of the region. That makes the community's economy spin more, spin better. I believe these are the characteristics of a successful business that only tends to grow.

36- What do you think motivated the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno to open his own business?

I think he saw a niche market, you know. He saw the absence of something bigger, that could supply the local needs. Mercantil Nazareno is also a supplier itself. He sells products in a slightly higher volume to some other smaller, local businesses. So, I believe he saw the opportunity to do business and develop financially in his own region. Helping his own family, and so on.

37- Do you consider the Mercantil Nazareno successful?

For the region where the business is located, I would say so. However, if we put this company elsewhere, in a more developed environment, I would say that he is not successful. He is geographically successful, but he lacks in development, such as bringing new technologies, and so on.

38- Knowing the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno, what do you think he considers a success for his company?

I think he considers a business successful when this business is making good money.

39- How do you think you can measure a company's success?

I think constancy in the market, and for that, it would take time, to see if it really succeeds, because there are companies that are very good today and tomorrow are very bad. So, these companies are not successful. They had a peak of success, which came and went. And generating jobs, too. The more jobs generated, the more successful the company must be. If it modernizes, also and over time absorb the technologies available in the

industry. I also think that it attends to the needs of the population in general. I think these are all ways to measure a company's success.

40- What do you think of the following sentence: The growth of the community can be used as a way to measure the success of local companies!

I believe so because if the community grows more and more, local businesses tend to have a tendency to grow as well. So, I believe it is a connected thing... the more the community grows, the more the community has a better financial condition, the more the local businesses are growing too.

41- Do you think there is any connection between a company's success and the way it looks after the local community?

Yes. If it's a company that wants to grow, that wants to be a highlight in the market. A company that wants to stay in the market, I believe it has to have this vision with and for the community, it has to have a more critical look. And not just thinking about today. The owner has to think about tomorrow. They have to think about the next generations. They have to think about providing and bringing jobs and income to the local community.

42- What do you think of companies that are considered successful, but that doesn't have any kind of social responsibility?

I think they're companies that may fail in the future. Because companies today have social responsibilities. For example, by employing people from the senior group, people with disabilities, trying to offer jobs to the local community. I see that giving the first employment opportunity is also a way to help society. So, if this company doesn't do anything like that, and doesn't follow these "rules," over time, I believe they are companies doomed to failure.

43- Just to confirm. Do you think that when a company is being responsible it will make it have longevity in the market?

Yeah. It's going to have a constancy instead of a punctual growth. That they will continue to grow steadily.

### Interview with Community Member – Participant 3

1- Have you ever heard about the term “Business Social Responsibility”?

Yes.

2- What do you understand about this topic?

I understand that it is the responsibility towards the community and the responsibility towards nature and everything in my neighbourhood.

3- Do you know the Mercantil Nazareno?

Yes, I do. I know it very well.

4- Do you think that Mercantil Nazareno is important for the development of society?

I certainly do. Mercantil is very important to our region. Because it provides goods to small businesses and everybody in the community. Everything we need, we just need to call or go there, and it is delivered on the same day. If he can't deliver on the same day, the next day we get it.

5- Who do you think should help the community to develop? Who do you think should be involved in community development?

The city, the politicians, the public administration.

6- What is your opinion about the following sentence: Improving the community is an exclusive obligation of the government!

I disagree! We need to have the participation of the government, of course, but the community is more important. Without the support of the community and all the people inside the community, we don't have a nice space... a nice space to live in. Everyone inside the community should try to help and develop it.

7- Just to confirm, do you believe that the companies within the community are also responsible for the improvements?

Of course. If you have a company in the community, it will bring jobs, it will generate income. It will help to provide a better living condition for those people. It can help everyone.

8- Do you know if the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno helps the community in any way?

Yes, he does! I will talk about the help he gave me. Now that we are in the middle of the COVID virus situation, it was a difficult situation here for me. He helped me with my goods that were stuck because I would not be able to sell. I would not be able to do anything. He collected my goods and said that when I start working again, he would return it to me. He did it with a good heart. So, when the pandemic is over, I can start working again, with new products.

9- Did he charge anything for that help?

No. He didn't charge anything. it was for free. He just wanted to help.

10- Do you know if the Mercantil Nazareno has helped families in the community financially?

I can't tell if he has helped financially, but I know he helps on commemorative dates. He gives gifts to the children, mothers' day gifts, Christmas gifts. But now, in the financial term, I don't know, because I don't work with them there. And I never bothered to ask about it either.

11- Do you know if he advertises the support the Mercantil Nazareno offers?

No, He does it more discreetly. We get to know he does because the community is small, so everything that happens in the community, we get to know. You get to know what's happening.

12- Just to confirm. All those examples of help that he does are non-financial help, correct?

That's right. Non-financial.

13- You just said that you've been a beneficiary of his help, correct?

Correct. He helped me many times before, and he has also helped me now, during the pandemic.

14- Did he offer to help, or did you have to ask for support?

He realised that I would have a loss, during this period of the pandemic, so he offered me help. I did not have to ask for it. Maybe because I am an old customer, I do not know. He helped me when I needed it.

15- Do you think of other forms of support that the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno could offer, but that he still does not?

Yes, he could do promotions on goods to be able to move the stock, get the older things out at cheaper prices. It would also help a person who wants to buy a good, but that thinks that the price is high. Even if just for the products that are close to the expiration date, he could have a clearance or something, but he does not give a discount. He could do that. It would also help him to get rid of a product that he may even lose, because of its expiration date.

16- Do you think that a company can be successful without helping the community?

No. Because when it helps the community, it will get a return from that community. Security, respect, that kind of thing. I see it that way.

17- What do you think motivates businesspeople to help the community, in general?

Since we are a small and needy community, I think every company sees that it has to help the community to improve the situation of the place and the people who live there. They can help the company as well by doing so. Like, the community can be a safer place to live and to do business. People can be healthier and happier.

18- What do you think motivates the owner of this enterprise to help the local community?

Since he's the biggest business in the community, he helps the people because he has a better financial condition. That, because he has a good financial condition, that's why he can help. He might get motivated because he can help.



19- Do you think that the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno helps the community because it is the right thing to do or because he suffers from pressure from the community to do it?

I think he suffers the pressure from the community, which helps him to decide to help.

20- Just to confirm. Do you think that he gets a little push to do the right thing, but he does it because of social pressure?

That's right, he gets that push. I see that most of the business owners' think that giving jobs is already a lot.

21- Do you think he would help, if he wasn't "being pressured to help"?

Now you got me. I think he would help because people from the community buy from him a lot. People use a lot of the space to trade with him, so he feels the responsibility to give to those people a return, a support. Even if it is just a little thing.

22- Do you think that by helping the community, the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno is also helping the enterprise itself?

Yes! When he helps the community, the community recognizes the work he has done for the community. So, he gets a return when he does so.

23- What is your school level?

I have high school complete.

24- Do you think that a person's school level can influence how they look at the local community?

Yes, of course. If a person has a higher school level, they might see the community's problems differently.

25- Do you think that the school level of the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno influences the way he looks at the community?

Yes, it does. I think it does. I don't know what level of education Nazareno has, but he has a very big vision for the business.

26- How long have you been living in this community?

I have been living in this community for the past 23 years.

27- Do you think that the time a person lives in the same community can influence the way they look at the community?

Absolutely. The more years you spend in the community, the more you get involved with the community, the more you have respect for those people and the community respects you too.

28- Do you know how long the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno has been living in the community?

I have been living here for 23 years. When I arrived here, he had been here for some time already. I think it's been a good 30 years that he lives in the community. I'm not sure, but I think that's about it.

29- Do you think that the time that he has lived in the community has also influenced the way he takes care of the community?

Yes, because he already has roots in the community, so he feels obliged to help. He has been living here for so many years. He knows these people. He has friendships. People respect him. All of these influences his actions.

30- And you, are you a client of the Mercantil Nazareno?

Yes, and I buy from them every week.

31- What motivated you to be a client of the Mercantil Nazareno?

Buying from the Mercantil Nazareno I have no extra delivery charges. He delivers to my door. And if I was to buy from the competition or the closest town, I'd have to pay for those fees. Also, he has got everything I need.

32- What's your relationship with the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno? Do you have a strictly customer-seller relationship, or do you have a friendship bond?

We have a relationship of customer and seller, but socially, at community parties, we get along as well.

33- Do you know if the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno has friendships in the community?

Yes, He has many friendships. For the years he has been living there, serving everyone, he has a great friendship with the people.

34- Do you think that this bond of friendship with the residents of the community influences the level of support that he is willing to offer to these people?

Yes! Because I think since he has been all this time in the community, he knows the tastes and what the community likes, and needs. This way he can serve better, and to help as well.

35- Do you think that the community trusts the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno?

Yes, they do! They trust so much that there are people who have stopped buying from the centre of the closest town, which is more developed, to buy from the Mercantil Nazareno.

36- Do you know if the majority of the customers who buy from the Mercantil Nazareno are from the community or do they come from nearby regions?

Everyone in the community buys from the Mercantil Nazareno, but the neighbouring regions also buy from him, because his business is the biggest in the region.

37- Do you think that because the community is his client, this also influences the way he looks at the needs of the community?

Yes. I see that he is very interested in knowing what the community needs in order to have it and offer it.

38- Looking at the community itself, do you consider the community loyal to the enterprise? Are they loyal consumers?

Yes, they are! They are loyal consumers because otherwise, they would choose the most developed centre in the nearby city. Also, Mercantil Nazareno can be more expensive than other shops as well, but they still buy there.

39- Do you think that the community offer any kind of return to the Mercantil Nazareno?

They produce for the Mercantil Nazareno to buy, and they also buy from the Mercantil Nazareno afterwards.

40- In what way do you think the community could help to make the local businesses grow?

I think that the community has to be more interested in the businesses they have in order to develop the place where we live. I think they can help by being good customers.

41- Do you think people who live in the community care about the future of the Mercantil Nazareno?

Yes! They are always asking for more things. For it to be developed more and more. To bring the use of technology to make it easier to pay by credit card, these things.

42- Do you think the community protects the small businesses that exist within the community?

Yes. Protect like this...when we see any suspicious movement around the region, the community soon reacts. We communicate with others to see what is going on.

43- Do you know if the Mercantil Nazareno has ever suffered any kind of assault? Has the community ever done anything like this or not?

Yes, he has already suffered mugging, at the time the community was very violent. Nowadays, it is no longer so violent, but he has suffered three or four assaults.

44- But were the people who robbed the business residents of the community?

I think the resident was the scout. He saw what was happening in the Mercantil Nazareno and gave the tips to people from outside because he didn't want to be a suspect. But it is just a speculation. The only thing we know is that the people from the community do not take from the community.

45- Since the Mercantil Nazareno is helping the community, do you think the community would attack the enterprise?

No. It has been about 3 years that nothing violence has happened here. It's quiet. The people are more respectful with the owners of the companies inside the community, and even when they see any suspicious movement, they are the ones who report it.

46- What does it mean to have a successful business for you?

A successful business is when you get a return from the customer. The client is satisfied. He returns, he praises you, he encourages you. So, I think that describes a successful business. But we cannot forget the profits, as well. If the business has started small and now it has developed itself. If the business is selling more, and if the business is being more accepted by the community. That is a successful business. It is the sum of all those elements.

47- What do you think motivated the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno to open his own business?

I think that the district was growing, and he saw the need for a business in the region. The community has grown, and he grew along with the community. Today, Barra Nova is a district with more than a thousand families living here, I think, and they are the only big business in the community. And they serve everyone.

48- Do you consider the Mercantil Nazareno successful?

Yes, I do, because he started small and today, it is a big company.

49- What do you think the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno considers a success?

Profit! High profits, I think.

50- Just to confirm. Do you believe that, for the owner of the business, the financial situation would be the way to show that he is successful?

Yes, of course! He is a businessman after all. Profits are important.

51- How do you think that the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno measures the success of the enterprise, apart from the profits?

He has been buying real estate in the community. He has been increasing the potential of his business. He bought cars. I think that he does look at all those things as well. Things that he owns now.

52- So, just to confirm. Do you think the owner of Mercantil Nazareno measures the success of his business by buying things within the community, things to increase his assets?

Yeah! He is offering a better life to his family. Cars and university to his children.

53- Do you think that having socially responsible practices, by helping the community, it also helps the Mercantil Nazareno to succeed?

Yes! I think so. Together with the community, he protects the green areas, protects the animals, protects the space where he lives. He is successful because all of those things together.

54- Do you think that the socially responsible practices that the owner of the business has made him see his enterprise as more successful, apart from making a profit?

He considers to be successful for what he has achieved over the years, I believe. He worked hard and it made him successful. I am not sure if he would link being socially responsible with being successful.

55- So, since he is able to help the community, can he use this help as a way to consider himself successful?

Yes. In a way. But like I said, I do not see those two things that connected.

56- What do you think of the following sentence: The growth of the community can be used as a way to measure the success of companies within that community.

I see that community growth helps businesses to grow. I agree with this sentence. They need each other to grow. Because there is no point in having a big business in the community if the community won't buy from it. If the people from the community is going to shop outside the community, the businesses inside the community will fall.

57- Do you think that the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno considers the community's improvements, which were promoted by his enterprise, as a way to measure the company's success or not?

Yes, in a way. The community has been improving. He has helped in some ways because he brings things to the community to make them feel good. For example, if I'm going to build a house, if I can buy everything here, I'm going to make a good house and I'm going to feel good because of the Mercantil Nazareno. I will remember that he helped me to make my dream to come true.

58- Do you think the success of an enterprise is linked to the success and growth of the community or are they not connected?

Yes, they are connected. As I said, the community needs the businesses and the businesses need the community.

## **Interview with Community Member – Participant 4**

- 1- Have you ever heard of the term "business social responsibility"?

I've heard of it, but I haven't deepened my knowledge on the subject, but I've heard of it.

- 2- What do you understand by business social responsibility?

I understand that it is when a company acts in a social way, you know. By helping the society, helping the environment and being a good example to society. In the community where I live, I see that they could have a great responsibility for the good life of people, for the well-being of people.

- 3- Do you know the Mercantil Nazareno?

Yes, I do.

- 4- Do you think that the Mercantil Nazareno is important for the growth of the community of Barra-Nova?

I believe so, because it is a small place that we live in. The Mercantil Nazareno has everything we look for. I believe that if you go there, you find everything you need. So, I think it helps the growth and development of the community because they can offer help to people, things for the well-being, quality products, these kinds of things.

- 5- Who do you think, in general, is responsible for helping the growth of local communities?

The main responsible are us, the residents. Because it is from the actions of the community residents, from our searches, from our knowledge, from what we think is right, that the community can develop. I think the community must be always seeking to learn in order to do the right thing. That is why I believe that whoever lives in the community is the main element for growth and development of the community.

- 6- What is your opinion about the following sentence: Improving the community is an exclusive obligation of the government!



I do not agree with that sentence. I believe that the government has to do its part, but as I said before, the biggest responsible are the people who live in the society. Because it's from what we do, from what we think that changes might happen. Because if we wait for everything to happen because of the government, if we will just stand still and do nothing, and I doubt the government will do anything either.

If we don't help, society will not grow, it will not have continuity. So, I think that's a very relative sentence. I believe that the population, the people, are the main elements for the growth to happen.

7- Do you know if the Mercantil Nazareno has helped the community, in any way?  
I do not know if it has helped. The help that the business gives is by providing this service. Since we are far from the commercial centre of the nearest city, and since the transportation to the city is not very easy, this is the help that he gives to society. The Mercantil Nazareno is close by.

Also, I believe they helps us a lot, because we have people that can't afford to buy, to pay on the day, so he gives them a credit, so they can pay another day, those things.

8- Just to confirm. He has this habit of selling things on credit, to the customers.

Exactly. I think almost 90% of the people who buy from there uses the credit. He's not strict, you know. He's a person who likes to help.

9- Does he publicize that help of letting people pay on credit?

He does not advertise it. You just hear about it from other people, you know. And we also know because we have been buying from there for a long time.

10- Do you know if the Mercantil Nazareno has helped with food baskets?

No. I don't think so.

11- Have you, at any time, been beneficiated from the company's help?

No. I'm just a client. I've never received any help from them.

12- In what ways do you think Mercantil Nazareno could help the community of Barra Nova, but he does not?

I think that giving food baskets, because there are a lot of people who really need it. I think that since the Mercantil Nazareno is a very old trade, it doesn't have much to offer, you see. I am referring to that feeling of comfort in the store. I believe that some renovations in the store, like a bakery. Something that would call more for customers, or something that we don't have in our community. Something different. Getting out of that old way of selling. Something that would make the customers happier.

13- Just to confirm. Do you think that by bringing improvement to the market, he would also be helping the community?

Absolutely! Because it would make people more excited about going there and shopping there.

14- Do you think a company can be successful without helping the community?

No. Honestly, no. Because what makes a company profitable is the community around it. And these days, I feel that the customers have started to be more conscious about the responsibility of the companies, even the small ones. So, if the company doesn't integrate with society and make a difference to society, I believe it won't succeed. It is only successful if it really reaches out to society and stays together with society.

15- What do you think motivates businesspeople, in general, to help the local communities?

That's exactly what I said before. The benefits that helping the society brings to the companies. If the clients see that the company is reaching out, it is trying to improve the society, it is offering something new, you know... that gets the client's attention. At least, that is what I think.

16- Just to confirm. Do you think that by helping the community, the company is also helping itself?

Sure, because there is always a return. I'm sure there'll be a return.

17- What do you think discourages the owner of Mercantil Nazareno? Why do you think he doesn't help the community as much as he could?

Like I said before... I think it is because he has an old style of business. He has this company since the old days. I see that don't invest much in upgrades, systems, because it's a local, rural business.

18- If the Mercantil Nazareno helped in some way, do you think the owner would help because it is the right thing to do or because of pressure from society?

I believe that from what I know of the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno he would give the help not wanting anything in return. And I am sure that the society would give back. Because by helping the society, there will surely be a return. I think he understands that by offering help to the community, he will get a return from this community.

19- What's your school level?

I have got high school complete.

20- Do you think a person's school level can influence how they help the local community?

It certainly can, because schools today are well connected to the society. Schools teach you how to behave in society, how you should act. So, people who have a full schooling or something like that, they will certainly influence society. They will have thoughts and attitudes for the community. I believe that schooling has a big influence on how people see society. But people that didn't go to school can also help, of course.

21- Would you know the level of schooling that the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno has?

No, I don't know.

22- Do you think that the school level of the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno can influence the way he looks and cares for the community?

It certainly does. We see when the person who is in business has a good schooling or when he hasn't studied a lot. We understand by the way he deals with the community and the needs of the community. As I said, I don't know his education level, but I think that if he had the opportunity to study more, we would help more, because it would make sense, a financial sense, you know.

23- How long have you been living in this community?

I have been living here for 27 years. Born and raised here.

24- Do you think that the time a person lives in the community can influence the level of support they are willing to offer?

Yes, it certainly can. Because we grow seeing what the community needs. We grow seeing how we could change, what type of support we could give to the community. We grow along with the community, so you know what is missing and what is not missing. So. It certainly has an influence.

25- Do you know how long the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno has lived in this community?

I don't know, but it's been a long time.

26- Why do you think that even though he's been living in the community for so long, he's not so motivated to help?

I believe that because of his old way of serving the client; of not investing in new systems, of not seeking to study and know the ways he could help to improve the local community and the company. I believe that this does not motivate the owner of the enterprise to help the community more actively.

27- Are you a customer of the Mercantil Nazareno?

Yes, I am.

28- What motivated you to be a customer of the Mercantil Nazareno?

That's basically what I've already said. It's because it's far from where we live to the neighbouring city, so I to buy at Mercantil Nazareno. But I also buy there because of the facilities we have, like the credit.

29- What's your relationship with the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno?

Since it's a very old business, everybody considers him as a friend. And there are no restrictions. It's friendship! It's not just customer-entrepreneur. It's a really friendly relationship.

30- Do you know if most of the customers of the Mercantil Nazareno come from the community or the surrounding regions?

They come from the community. There are also some other communities that are close to mine that come to buy there too, but I think most are from our community.

31- Do you think that because the customers of the Mercantil Nazareno are members of the community and of his bonds of friendship, he could be more motivated to help?

I think so. As I said, people from the community are used to shop from him. I think he does not feel pressured by the community to help.

32- Just to confirm... do you think the fact that he's not under any kind of pressure from the community would be a fact that he's not helping either?

Yes, and because I think he does not feel responsible to help the community. But it's like I said, I believe that the lack of knowledge, of seeking new things, of seeking study, is what causes this lack of interest and motivation. He doesn't see that he has to do something for the community, to get a better return.

33- Do you think that the people of the community are loyal customers of the Mercantil Nazareno?

Yes, because most of them have been customers for a long time. Most of them are retired, also. So, I believe that they are loyal. Likewise, they also have lots of friends in the community that are the customers. That's it.

34- In what way do you think the community could give a return to the company, if it had social activities?

Since the company needs society and society needs the company, I believe that if the company does something more for the society, society will surely do more for the company. The company will get a return. The community can give back by visiting more the shop, buying more, advertising the business and that's it.f

35- Do you think the people in the community care about the future of the Mercantil Nazareno?

I think that the community today, especially the rural areas, don't see much interest from helping the society. I think that they want improvements and the continuity of the company, but I am not sure if they would be willing to do anything else besides hope for.

36- Do you know if the Mercantil Nazareno has suffered from the local violence?

Yes, he has. They've been robbed about two or three times.

37- Do you know if the robbers were members of the community?

No. The people who robbed the Mercantil were not the people from our community.

38- Do you think people from the community protect the small businesses that we within the community?

Yes, they do. They certainly do. People in a certain way do protect small businesses. They protect by not buying from outside the community, by valuing local business, by being a faithful customer in the local business.

39- What does a successful business mean to you?

A successful business to me means when you get what you fought for. It is when the dream come true. A successful business is when you have progress. A successful business is when they include society in their plans, and they will get a return from it.

40- What do you think motivated the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno to open his own business?

I believe that he saw the need and he thought that it could work. Then he grew, grew, and he saw that the demand was being high. He saw that he needed to grow, and he grew.

41- Do you consider the Mercantil Nazareno successful?

I do. From the moment he was founded, until today. He started from the bottom, from the very bottom. And today I believe he has got what he wanted. In my view, he still needs to do a lot of things, he needs innovations, new systems. He needs to update himself a little bit to continue to be successful.

42- Knowing the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno, what do you think he considers a success for the company?

I believe that, knowing the owner well, I believe that success is profit. Either profit or having lots of customers. But I think high profits mostly.

43- What do you think of the following sentence: The community development can be used as a way to measure the success of companies that are within the community!

I believe so, in a way, yes. Local development has a lot to do with the development of local companies. And like it or not, they do influence the development of the business within the community.

44- Do you think there is any link between business social responsibility and the perception of the companies' success?

Absolutely. Business social responsibility, I believe is the humblest part of the company. If the company is being humble with society it grows more, because the society will return by supporting the company back. By looking at society in a deeper way, by seeing to understand the needs of the community to act in ways to develop it, I believe that the company will be successful, it will have a very remarkable growth.

45- What do you think of companies that are successful but don't have an active responsibility?

So, it's a business that is very disconnected from society. Society only participates in it because it really needs it. There's no other way. There's nowhere else to go. I think companies that have social responsibility will certainly make more progress. Those companies that are successful, but have no social responsibility, is like I said. People have to go, they have to consume there, because there is no other place to go. They have to go. However, if they had options, I am sure they would leave those companies behind.

## Interview with Community Member – Participant 5

1. Have you ever heard about business social responsibility?

So, for me, this is a new topic. Because we hear a lot of talk about the accountability of various bodies, you know, and then on this issue of companies, for me, it's a new one because I'm not directly linked to the issues of companies, you know. But I believe that the social responsibility of companies, this understanding that we can have about the activities that companies can be developing, to contribute to the growth and development of the place where this company is, the community, society, in short. Several other things as well.

2. Do you know the Mercantil Nazareno?

Yes, I do. I know the Mercantil Nazareno.

3. Do you consider that the Mercantil Nazareno is important for the growth and development of the community of Barra Nova?

In part, yes! I believe so because we live in a community that is a bit distant from downtown, it is important because we have commerce that has several options of products that we may be buying, and this supports the growth in relation to the use of these products, so we do not need to leave the community to go to the centre of the nearby city.

4. Why do you think the Mercantil Nazareno might not help the development of the community?

Because I believe they don't have so many actions that involve the community, right? Because the very name social responsibility brings us to this interpretation of what that would be. That's what I think.

5. Who do you think is responsible for the development and growth of local communities, in general?

I believe all the people who are part of it, right? The integration among residents, among the parties, that favour and are favoured both by commerce, the culture, and education. In the case of your research, we are strictly talking about Commerce, but I believe that the growth of the community comes from the interest of the population.



6. What is your opinion about the following sentence: Improving for the community is an exclusive obligation of the government.

I think it has the participation of the government, of course, in relation to public policies, you know. Because we need public policies to continue. But then, we also need to know what these public policies are, and we also need to understand what we can do to participate and/or develop these policies. I believe that it's not only the government, but it is a partnership between the government and the population. Because if the government stops, we also stop. It's a two-way street.

7. Do you know if the Mercantil Nazareno has helped the community in any way?

Raquel, to be honest, I don't think it has helped that much. Neither with social nor financial issues. In relation to finance, I believe it helps in the sense that some of the owner's relatives work there, but it's not the whole community, right? And in relation to social issues, I don't see so many social projects that emphasize the company's contribution to the families in the community, especially those who are in extreme social vulnerability, for example

8. When you say that there are not many projects happening, is there at least one project or not?

I don't think so. I don't think there is.

9. Do you think that if there were any projects, the owner would publicize the realization of this project or not?

I don't think so. I believe that the project would happen, but it would happen in a very shy way, right, without much publicity. Because it depends a lot on the actions that this project is probably going to have. For example, we have 30 families that need to be in this project. Maybe the company doesn't want to help the 30 families. So, they will choose 10. Then only those 10 families would know about the project and participate in the project.

10. Do you think of any other ways that Mercantil Nazareno could help the community, and it doesn't?

I believe that one of the actions that could be good would be to help the public schools regarding school meals, for example. Because many children are in need, and the government is not giving enough attention to them. A company that comes to school to help, especially in school meals, is of fundamental importance. I think about school meals because I also think about the children who only have the meal at school, who then when

they leave the school it is more difficult to feed themselves. However, there are other issues that the company can help, but mainly on this issue of food, right. In relation to the community, I believe that promotions and stock burning, so that people can buy the products of the store. It would help both sides.

11. Do you think a company can be successful without helping the community?

This is a very subjective question on this issue, but I believe that when the company helps the community and the community see this help, it will surely get better and better. What moves the company is the community, as a client. So, if the company promotes social activities and there is this relationship between the seller and the buyer, I think it will surely make the company very successful. You're going to go there and buy stuff because you also believe in the company.

12. What do you think are the business owners' reasons, in general, to help communities?

I believe that what motivates someone to help is empathy, right? If we talk about it in a general way, we know that many entrepreneurs came from nothing and they built their careers, and then I think that this question of putting oneself in the other person's place could be a point to be considered.

For example, an owner can think like: I grew up here, I built my career, now I am a successful entrepreneur, and now I'm going to try to give back to my community. I'll try to help with food baskets or in some other way, with a social project, anyway. I think this issue of empathy, of putting yourself in the other person's place is the biggest motivator.

13. You said that you believe the owner of Mercantil Nazareno doesn't help the community, but what if he did. What do you think would have motivated him to do it?

I don't have a concrete answer! As I told you, it is my opinion. But I think, perhaps, he would be motivated by the desire to see the inhabitants of the community from another perspective. Like helping a needy family, so they can grow up or have another perspective on life. Because help usually comes from that, you know, from feeding. I always talk about food. Because it's something that really gets to me, you know? The question of food, or school supplies for a child, or even a daily service at the Mercantil, by getting more people from the community to help. I believe this could be seen as motivation as well.

14. Imagining a situation where he has a social project, do you think that this social project would have been motivated because he thinks it is the right thing to do or because he is suffering pressure from society to do it?

To be quite honest with you, I think it's because of the social pressure, you know. Because Nazareno has been in the market for a long time, you know. So, he could have done it before of his own free will. And like this, I've been living here forever, I know the Mercantil from always, and I've never seen these actions. Maybe, If a person goes there, and said, look Nazareno, you have to, for the growth of your business, help in the church, with something, help in the school with something, or do some project, some health promotion, in short, to help the population. I think with pressure, because of his own will, maybe not.

15. Do you think that if the owner of Mercantil Nazareno helped the community, he would also be helping the enterprise itself?

Absolutely. If even when he doesn't help anyone, in my perspective, he already has a fantastic growth for his company, imagine if he helped. If he helped, every time that everyone buys something from there, they would think that they are also helping another family. This is a social responsibility.

16. What is your school level?

Raquel, I have a bachelor's degree in humanities. I am also a pedagogue and psycho-pedagogue, and currently, I'm taking a master's degree in teaching and teacher training, here in Ceará, in a public university. My education has always been at a public university and I also work in a school. I am the director of a school, of a children's education centre.

17. Do you think the school level of an entrepreneur can influence the level of help he is willing to give to the community?

I believe so because he will have a better cultural capital, you know, to understand what those actions really are, what these projects are, and how this will benefit the community, as well as help in the growth of the company.

18. Do you think that the school level of the owner of the Nazarene mercantile influences the help he gives, or in this case, does not give the local community?

I think the influence, although I think Nazarene is an extremely intelligent person. You get there, then he does some mathematic sums in his head that I can't do, you understand. I think he's a very smart guy. Smart too because I believe in this success he has today.

But I believe that if he had a higher level of education, he would possibly improve in the way he looks at the community. Even though his children have a good level of education, but they are not the owner, He is. He is the one responsible for the business.

19. You said you were born and raised in the community, correct? So, how long have you lived in the community? How old are you?

I'm 27 years old.

20. Do you think that the time a person lives in the community influences the level of help they would be willing to offer the community?

Maybe so, because you will have the experience of living in the community. People might think: I've been here for so long, and what am I doing to help this community to grow?

So, I think that this experience of living here influences on how people will look to the community after it.

21. Why do you think that the time living in the community did not motivate the owner of the mercantile Nazarene to do something for the community?

I think that the community issues are going unnoticed, right? I think he might say: I can see this problem here, but I'll try to help it later. I think it is a matter of letting things go, even though when they are important.

22. Do you think the community put enough pressure on the local businesses to motivate them to help?

I don't think so. Even by myself, right? What am I doing to pressure Nazareno to do a project, you know? I believe that the community has also its fault, you know.

23. Are you a client of Mercantil Nazareno?

Yes, I'm a customer of Mercantil Nazareno.

24. What motivated you to be a client of Mercantil Nazareno?

First, because they are one of the biggest markets in the community. It has everything you need; You need, you find it there. From food products, personal hygiene products, hygiene for the house, to construction material, everything is there. So, because they are one of the biggest commerce in the community, we ended up going there.

25. What's your relationship with the owner of the Nazarene mercantile and his employees? Are you strictly a client-seller or do you have some kind of friendship bond?

I think it is a salesman-customer relationship only. I talk with his children, but in relation to me and him, it is just a customer and a salesman, really. I get there, I buy, and I leave.

26. In general, do you think that when a person has a friendly relationship with people in the community, it could influence the level of help that person is willing to offer, because of having a friendship, a bond?

Yes, because let's say, if I was his friend, for example, I could say, look, we could create a project and such, I believe you should do such and such. But there's also the question of being mature enough of thinking about these aspects, right? Because if I'm his friend, but I don't have the insight to do anything for the community either, it does not make any difference. However, I believe that when you know people from the region and you are friends with them, it will make you care more about them.

27. Do you think the owner of Mercantil Nazareno has friendships within the community?

Yes, he does.

28. Do you think that because of these friendships, he could be more motivated to help, since these people are also part of the community?

I think so. I believe so, but it's that thing of going unnoticed, right? I can be friends with him and everything, be a client, talk about various aspects, but some people are a bit disconnected, I don't know.

29. As far as clients are concerned, do you know if most of the clients are from the region or if they come from outside the community?

Here in Barra nova, we are a community, but there are other communities nearby, right? Actually, Barra Nova is a district and there are two neighbouring communities. So, these

people also come from these communities to make purchases at Mercantil Nazareno. However, I would say that most of the customers come from our community, you know.

30. Since the customers are part of the community, do you think he could feel more motivated to help these people since these people help his business?

Yes, he should, by the way, feel more motivated.

31. Do you consider people in the community as loyal customers of the market?

Yes, I do, because I think that if the customers weren't so loyal, they wouldn't have this success either. I say success because I see growth, as a customer. I see growth in the market, which used to be this little, and now it's this big. So, when we compare the sizes, we get a basis that there has been a growth.

32. Do you think that the community does anything to help the market to grow?

If you mean anything besides of being faithful customers, by buying there frequently, I don't think so. But I think the community helps the business to grow by being good customers.

33. Do you think these customers, this community, care about the future of the market? Do they want it to stay there or for them it doesn't matter?

Look, I think it does matter, yeah. Because if one day this Mercantil just disappeared, we'd have trouble. Although after a while we'd readapt to go down to the mountains, to go shopping in the centre and so on, however it would be more complicated. We'd really miss it.

34. Do you think that the community protects the small businesses that it has inside the community?

In parts, yes, because we buy from them, so by doing that, we keep them running. But in another situation, maybe not, because we're not aware that if we stop shopping from a small business it may disappear, and we may have some difficulty in acquiring the products that were supplied by the establishment.

35. In cases of robbery? Have you ever heard a story in the community, of a resident robbing the market?

I don't know about anything from the community robbing the business, but there were cases from guys who came from other places and did this act, but from the community itself I don't know any stories. If it happened, I don't know.

36. What does it mean to have a successful business for you?

I believe that a successful business is an enterprise that you get there and you find a variety of products and that if, by chance, I get at Mercantil Nazareno and say: Nazareno I would like a can of milk, and he doesn't have one. Then, if I go there another day and I find the product available, I believe this means that the business is a success. Because the owner of the Mercantil or the employees do not let their customers down.

37. Do you have any idea of what motivated the owner of Mercantil Nazareno to open his own business within the community?

Well, I've heard that his family has always been in this type of business. It seems that his parents, I think, or someone from his wife's family, something on that level. So, I believe that because it was his family line of business, he got motivated to have his own business, so that he could also build his career, as a businessman, as a salesman.

38. Do you consider Mercantil Nazareno successful?

Yes, of course. I think that because of the variety of products we find there, which is the professional side. And on the personal side, we also see everything he has built, right, as a way of having a better living, to both himself and his family. And in relation to the professional, this question of being the big commerce here in the community, right? And of having a huge variety of products for customers, from food products, personal hygiene, as I mentioned before.

39. What do you think are the ways to measure a company's success?

I think that the number of customers the company has. If the older customers are still there and the ones are coming. In my opinion, one of the factors that we can think when talking about growth in the company is exactly that. Today I have one client, tomorrow I will have three. So, it means that my company is supplying the demand and I am attracting more people.

40. Do you think if the Mercantil Nazareno had a more active social responsibility, it would help it to be more successful or do you think this is unrelated?

It is related. I believe it is. Because everyone would comment about it, right? They would say: Look, Mercantil Nazareno is helping the local school with food and supplies. Or, if an outsider comes to visit some sightseeing spots in the community and this person wants to buy, let's say, a sunscreen. Then the people from the community would recommend Mercantil Nazareno by saying: "You should go to Mercantil Nazareno, probably they have it there. The owner is such a nice guy. He helps the community and all. Then a person who comes from the outside will be motivated to buy there, knowing that the owner gives back to the community.

I think that the way the community could help in the growth of the business could be word of mouth and showing how good the place is. I think that if the business had a better social responsibility activity, the community help would be greater. Because here in the community, as it is a small community, this word of mouth practice is very famous. One says something, the other says something, so it goes on and on.

41. What do you think about the following sentence: The community development can be used as a way to measure the success of companies that are within the community!

Absolutely. I think so, because those are the benefits that a company can give to the community, and the community rewards the companies by becoming a client and/or well speaking. I believe that everyone grows, right? That's how it is supposed to happen in a community.

42. Do you think that the owner of Mercantil Nazareno associates his success to any kind of business social responsibility?

Actually, I don't even know if he has that interpretation. But I believe he thinks that the success of his business depends on him and that is it. He might think like: I went there, I built it, I fought for it, I did it! But if he hadn't had a community that had become a customer of the Mercantil, he wouldn't have gone so far! So, I believe that the partnership with the community, in any way, was important for his growth. And even if he thinks that the business growth is individual, the community might even be benefited as well, somehow.

For example, if the owner of the Mercantil decides to have a bakery inside the business because there is no bakery there at the moment. He grows financially, and people grow because we will have an option to buy fresh bread on the spot, cake, things like that. I said it because that image came into my head.

43. Do you think a company can be successful even if it doesn't help the community?



I think It can be successful too, but I believe that if the company does help the community, the success would come faster and better. Because if we talk about giant companies, many big companies have their social responsibility. They help and so on. I believe that a small company could help as well. They might help differently, but they can and should help!

## Interview with Community Member – Participant 6

- 1- Have you ever heard about business social responsibility?

Actually, no. I'm hearing it now for the first time.

Interviewer: Business social responsibility is basically when a company, regardless of its size, helps the community in any way. It can be financially; it can be by offering to volunteer. When a company tries to help in the community development, that's the social responsibility of a company.

- 2- Do you know the Mercantil Nazareno?

Yes.

- 3- Do you consider Mercantil Nazareno important for the development of the community?

In a way it is, because it employs some people, and it helps the community a lot when we need it, it is very useful, because it sells many things.

- 4- In what way is it useful? Could you describe it?

In the matter of serving, with goods, if you need building material, you can find there. Whatever you're looking for, there's almost everything there. You always get what you need there.

- 5- Who do you think should be responsible for the growth and development of the local community?

I think it's the whole group together. I believe that the politicians, the citizens, the businessmen, they all have a place and time to help. I think the people that have a little bit more condition should try to help more. I think it's everybody.

- 6- What do you think about the following sentence: Improving the community is an exclusive obligation of the government!

I don't fully agree, because it's not just the government. I think there are a lot of people who can also help to improve the community.

7- Do you know if the Mercantil Nazareno has helped the community in any way?

Not that I know of. I can't tell if they have helped, like with food baskets, or other things, I don't know. I've never heard of it.

8- Just to confirm, neither financial help nor help with food baskets (not financial), they have never done anything like that.

To my knowledge, no.

9- What do you think, knowing the Mercantil Nazareno's owner, if his business offered any kind of social responsibility practices, do you think he would advertise it?

I don't think he would. Right now, they are only throwing parties for kids, during the children's day. A little game for the kids, for the past three years. They advertised those events.

10- But do you consider this children's day party a way to help the society?

I think so because some parents don't have anything to give to the children on Children's Day, so this party that the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno organizes makes the children happy. So, I think it does, I think it does contribute to the community somehow!

11- Have you been benefited in any way by the Mercantil Nazareno?

No. The only benefit I have is that I buy there and it's easy because otherwise, I would have to go to the next city to buy. But it's good there, at Mercantil Nazareno, because it offers almost everything we need. What you need is there. The rest of the community's businesses just don't have it. They are small grocery stores that don't sell everything we need. I also have the benefit of doing the shopping there and receiving it at home, because he delivers it. Which I also consider as being helpful.

12- Are these deliveries paid or are they free?

They're all free.

13- When you think of the things he could do, as the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno. What do you think he could do to help the community that he doesn't do?

I think that if he could help with food baskets for the neediest families it would be a lot. It would be a good help. And because he owns a market, it would be a very easy thing for him to do, since he sells food. He could also help with money, but if he helped with a food basket it would be very good.

14- Why do you think food baskets would be better than money?

I think that the greatest need of these people is food. What they really need is food, because they have children at home, and sometimes they don't have enough food on the table. In my opinion, more important than money or anything is food. Be healthy and have food on the table.

15- Do you think a company can be successful without helping the community?

Yes, but I think that if it helped the community, it would be even more successful because a lot of people would be in a better financial situation, which would contribute to the company as well because they could be new customers in the future.

16- Just to confirm, do you think that when the company helps the community, it is also helping his business?

Exactly, because one thing contributes to the other.

17- What do you think motivates entrepreneurs to help communities, in general?

I think it might be a good heart. Because you have people who have a lot, and they might not contribute to anything. They just do not want to help others. So, I think you have to have a good heart first, to really have the will to help.

18- What do you think is missing for the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno to help the community? What is the missing motivation?

I think what is missing is to look more at the other, not just at yourself. Because sometimes there are people very close by who need it so much, but people can't see. I think looking more closely to see the needs of the next.

19- Do you think he is not looking at the needs of the community? Is he looking only at himself?

That's right. Because if I have and I don't help my own that needs so much, I am not paying attention to who is close, right?

20- Do you think that in general, the entrepreneurs would help the community because it is the right thing to do or because of the social pressure of the community?

I think because it's the right thing to do. It would be a more internal thing. What he feels is right is what he motivates.

21- What do you think of the phrase: Helping the community, the entrepreneur also helps the company itself!

I agree, because when a person changes their level of life, they will become clients of the company, or they will buy more from the company. It's one thing pushing the other.

22- What is your school level?

High school complete.

23- Do you think a person's school level can influence the way they look at the community?

I don't think so. Because sometimes a person who doesn't have many studies sees more the need of the other and tries to help, than people who have a higher school level.

24- So, just to confirm: Do you think the motivation to help is independent of the person's school level?

Yes! I think it is more dependent on the willingness to help the next one than on the time he spent in school.

25- Do you think that the level of schooling of the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno can influence the way he sees the needs of the community?

I don't think so either. It's like I said, some people don't have any studies, but they are moved by what other people are going through and want to help. And other times, the person has a high level of schooling and has money but does not have the will to help.

26- How long have you lived in the community?

For 36 years. I am born and raised here.

27- Do you think that the time a person lives in the same community can influence the way they see and take care of the community?

Also, because we come to participate in it, to know the life stories of each person since it is a small community. In a small community like ours, we know what the level of life of the person living in the community is like. They get to know a lot about the residents of the community. People from small communities know a lot of stories, and they know a lot about their neighbour's life, his conditions, and they see who has the greatest need.

28- Why do you think that living in the community for a long time hasn't influenced the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno to help the community since he has lived in the community for a long time?

I think it's wanting to see what's happening, you know. It doesn't just depend on how long he lives in the community. It depends on whether you want to see with different eyes what's happening in the community.

29- Are you a client of the Mercantil Nazareno?

Yes, I am.

30- What motivated you to be a client from there?

Because they're very helpful with the service. As I said, there's everything we're looking for. They have a good service. And also because of the credit. Because sometimes you don't have any money, but you go there and pay later. It makes it a lot easier. Because you don't always have money in your hand.

31- Do they have this payment on credit for everyone?

No. He gives credit to people who have been clients for a long time and who he trusts and has a friendship.

32- What is your relationship with the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno and/or employees? Is it a seller customer relationship or does he have a friendship relationship?

We have a friendship, you can say. Because of the amount of time I buy there. When I get there, besides shopping, we talk about other subjects, not only buying and selling, right? They're very friendly.

33- Do you think that when a person meets the people in the community, they have a friendship, that person can be more inclined to help the community?

I think so. Because they know more about the people, and they know more about the way of life of each one in the community.

34- Since the Nazarene has lived there for so long and has many friendships, why do you think he doesn't do anything for the community?

Yes. I've never heard anything about him helping people in the community in any way. And since the community is small, if he had done something, everyone would know. If he was a very helpful person in that, I'm sure the whole community would know. And he'd be much better known.

35- Do you know if the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno has ties of friendship within the community?

I think he has a relationship with his clients. More business-oriented, but I think you can say that it is a friendship yes.

36- Do you know if most of the customers of the Mercantil Nazareno are from the community or the surrounding region?

Both from the community and the surrounding regions as well. Whenever I go there I see people from the surrounding communities.

37- Do you think that because the customers are from the community, the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno could be more motivated to help this community?

I think so. Here in the community, there are a lot of needy people who need help. And someone who has more conditions could help more, right?

38- Do you think the community is composed of loyal consumers?

I think one part. Because a lot of people took advantage of the Nazarene giving this credit and they didn't pay, or they were too late. The owner even had to charge some people in front of everyone because he has lost his patience.

39- Do you think the community helps the small businesses that you have inside the community?

I think it helps like that... those who work there... who provide service. We also help because we are paying taxes and also buying there.

40- If a shop is opened in the community, do the people in the community become customers of that shop or do they prefer to go to the neighbouring city?

Usually, people in the community do, but not everyone is a good customer. Generally, when you open a business, there are always people to buy.

41- What do you think the community could do to help local businesses?

I think a very good help the community gives is in producing products that local businesses need. For example, some people make the coal and sell it to the Nazarene. From there, the Mercantil Nazareno sells on to other people. Or the community also produces fruit for commerce. From there he doesn't have to go to ceasa to buy these things. Ceasa is a place where businesses shop for fresh fruits and vegetables. Not to mention it's much more accessible. I think that's a big help.

42- Have you ever heard of a situation where the Mercantil Nazareno has been robbed?

Yes, I have!



43- Do you know if it was people from the community?

No! It wasn't people known here in the community. But the assaulter was very violent with them, but they weren't people from here.

44- Do you think that people from the community protect the business people that exist within the community?

Somehow, they do. Because if people happen to see something suspicious, people already call the owner of the business to warn him. Then there have been cases that he closed the Mercantil earlier because someone in the community warned that there were some weird people around the region. So, the community in those hours they help a lot. Letting people know if they notice something weird is going on.

45- Do you think the residents of the community care about the future of the Mercantil Nazareno?

Of course, because it's very important to us. I see a lot of people saying that if the Mercantil Nazareno just disappeared, it would be very bad for us because we would have to go to the neighbouring city every time we need to buy something. In the Mercantil Nazareno, he sells everything a little. Like, if I want to build a house, I can buy the things I need there. They sell clothes too. If you have someone who needs to buy a gift to go on a birthday. They have them there, too. You don't have to go to the nearest town to get those things.

46- What does a successful business mean to you?

I think it's that business that grows and works. That the owners can grow that business financially. When the family of the owner can also achieve a good financial situation through the business. And when they can give a better life to their children too. For example, when they can afford to pay for their children's college, as the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno did. I think it's all that. A lot of things, you know.

47- What do you think motivated the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno to open his business?

I think a lot of people here in the community have this desire to open their own business. Because it's a way for you to have no boss. You're the boss himself. You choose your working hours; you can choose the people who will work with you. All this I believe may have been the motivation for him to open his business, you know. I think this autonomy, this control, is what motivated him to open his business.

48- Do you consider yourself the successful Mercantil Nazareno?

Yeah. As I said, they've grown a lot. It started small and went up. And today they have a lot to offer in the store. They've achieved some nice growth.

49- What do you think the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno considers a success for him?

I believe the growth in sales, right. The business he does with his suppliers, to get more affordable goods. I think he puts it all together to see if his business is successful.

50- How do you think the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno measures this success?

I believe he sees if he makes a profit and if he can pay his employees. I think those who work in commerce can make a very good circle of contacts, they know many people. Even if it's not money, he makes a lot of friends and I think that's a way to measure success as well. Those connections he makes with his business can be considered a success.

51- Do you think that if the Mercantil Nazareno had a more active social responsibility, he would be more successful than he already is?

I think so because when the person helps, they get double the amount. I think the community would look at what he's doing and would want to be a client, if not, and would want to help even more. Not to mention that people would get closer and would want to help more as well.

52- What do you think of the following sentence: The growth of the community can also be seen as a way to measure the growth of the companies within the community!

I agree, because when the community grows, surely the companies that are within the community are growing as well.

53- Do you think that the success of a company is strictly linked to social responsibility that it can offer or are things that have no connection?

I don't think it's very connected. It does help, of course, it helps a bit, but there are so many companies out there that don't do anything for the communities, but they are still successful.

54- Can a company be successful even without helping the community?

It can because I see that the Mercantil Nazareno has grown a lot in the last years and they don't have social programs. But if companies helped the community, that would be better for everyone, both for the people who need help and for the development of the company itself.

## **Interview with Employee of Mercantil Nazareno – Participant 7**

- 1- Have you ever heard of the term business social responsibility?

Yes, I've heard of it.

- 2- What do you understand by that term?

Social responsibility is when the company generates some actions that seek the good in the environment where the company is involved or inserted. Those actions can involve the internal and external clients, the population itself of that community, and so on.

- 3- You are an employee of Mercantil Nazareno, correct?

Yes, I am. I have been working there for quite a long time.

- 4- Do you consider Mercantil Nazareno important for the development of the local community of Barra Nova?

Yes, I do, because it generates some jobs and it also provides some actions that can be considered as social responsibility practices of the company.

- 5- Who do you think should be responsible for the growth and development of the community?

The government, in the three spheres. Municipal, state and federal.

- 6- What do you think about the following sentence: Improving the community is an exclusive obligation of the government!

I think the word exclusive is very strong. The big thing is that the government is responsible for promoting public policies that will generate the development of local communities, but that the companies should have their share of responsibility and contribution to the other people in the society.

- 7- Do you know if Mercantil Nazareno has helped the community in any way?

Yes, it has. For many times promoting some cultural events, donation of food baskets. Whenever the owner can or/and is requested for sponsoring events that will happen in the region, or even if a person asks for help, the owner is always helping.

8- Do you know if the Mercantil Nazareno has financially helped families?

Yes, it has! Sometimes, but not for many times. I have seen the owner helping some families with money for medicine or something like that.

9- Do you know if there has been any disclosure of these helps to other members of the community?

No, there hasn't been. The only advertisement that sometimes exists is when there is some social event that the organizers themselves disclose the people who are helping, sponsoring the events. But when it comes to financial or something else more particular, it has never been publicized.

10- Why do you think there is no disclosure of the help?

Because there is no need to expose who you help. Because I think there is a difference between social responsibility and helping someone you know. That's how I see it and I think that the owner thinks the same way.

11- Aside from food baskets, has the Mercantil Nazareno helped in any other way, not financially?

Yes. Clothes. I think job creation is also a form of help, right?

12- Have you done any kind of volunteering on behalf of the company? During working hours?

Volunteering on behalf of the company, no. I haven't. But I am always present in the social events they produce in the community. I think I help them by being part of the event.

13- Do you think a company can be successful without helping the community?

It depends on what you consider as a success, right? We know that social responsibility in Brazil is a beautiful thing in the paper, but almost nobody thinks about it, really. But

many companies use social responsibility to do marketing, and it comes back with a return.

In the case of our community here. It's a very small community. If people don't see any improvement or if the social activities don't generate an improvement in the region, it doesn't bring a return for us. Not as if it was an obligation of the company to help. But if the business helps the community, it is expected that the community will help the company.

14- In general terms, what do you consider as a successful company?

I think a successful company is when the company gets, how can I say, the organization is doing well, and it is making a profit. When we talk about a private organization, right. If it was a public organization, it would be very different.

15- So, when you look at business success, would you focus on financial success only?

Not only on the financial part but also on the well-being of the employees and in always providing good service to the customers. This will also generate a return, in the end, financial, but it will also increase the image of the company. It might even change how the company is seen by society.

16- What do you think motivates entrepreneurs, in general, to help local communities?

I think that most of the entrepreneurs might do something good for the community because it is almost an obligation to them. If they are not obliged by the law, they might feel obliged to do something if their competitors are doing something. Also, I don't know if I can say that, but I think that they can also be motivated to help because by doing it, they are promoting the growth of the company itself. But there are also people who like to help! It is important to see the good in other people.

17- What do you think motivated the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno to help the community of Barra Nova?

I think he got motivated because he knows the reality of each person around here. We live in a small place and we know practically everyone here, you know.

18- Do you think the owner of Mercantil Nazareno helps the community because it is the right thing to do or because he feels pressure from the community to do it?

I think it's because it's the right thing to do. I would say that he has empathy for others. I think he understands that he can help because he is in a better position, financially speaking. There's no pressure of any kind coming from the community. At least, that's how I feel.

19- What you think of the following sentence: Helping the community is also helping the business.

As I said before, we live in a small community, so if there isn't a generation of income, of employment, the local commerce doesn't survive. So that's it. It's a way of moving the local business. Everybody knows each other and if we don't help each other, it gets more difficult. Even though we are a company that is considered big by community standards, we would not be able to continue without the community help. It would be much harder than already is.

20- What is your school level?

I have a bachelor's degree

21- Do you think that a person's school level, in general, can influence the level of help that person is willing to offer to a community?

It can. No, not really. I don't think the school level can influence that much. Because a person's schooling can bring more knowledge, but some people do not have such a high level of schooling, but who feel the need to help others. Not just because he sees it as the company's responsibility, but because he wants to help, to promote help.

22- Do you think the school level of the owner of Mercantil Nazareno influence in the level of community support provided?

I don't think it does. That's exactly why I said it. The owner of Mercantil Nazareno doesn't even have a completed fundamental school, and he doesn't understand much of these formal terms of business responsibility and such, but he knows that there are people who need help, and yet, without having a financial or logic reason behind his actions, he continues to promote such help.

23- How long have you been living in the community?

I have been living here for the past 20 years.

24- Do you think that the time a person lives in the community can influence the level of support and support they are willing to offer?

Yes, it can. It can because the longer you live in a place, the more people you know and bond with. So, it can influence, definitely.

25- Do you know how long the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno has been living in the community?

I believe that over 30 years, maybe.

26- Do you think the fact that he has lived in the community for so long has helped him to be more motivated to help people?

Of course, it did, because he knows everybody, and everybody knows him!

27- And about the customers. Are most of the clients from the community or do they come from nearby regions?

Most of them are from the community. However, we also serve people from other communities.

28- Do you think that because the community is the clientele of the Mercantil Nazareno, this might influence the level of support or motivation to support that the owner of the enterprise has?

I want to say yes, but there are also people who were beneficiated and comes from other communities. So, the help is not restricted only to the community itself, but to all customers.

29- Could you describe how people were beneficiated by the business?

Most of the times, people from inside the community is promoting an event and they come to the business and they ask the business to be one of the sponsors. They need our help, for example, for the children's party, for a cultural event, sports or something like that. Whenever they need help or support, they come and ask the company, and we help.



30- Do you consider the community residents as loyal consumers of the enterprise?

No, I do not. We have several competitors and they are always looking for better prices, and we have often seen our customers going to the competition. We don't have a big clientele list that, no matter what, they will always be here. We have a few, but not the vast majority.

31- Do you think that the community supports and helps to maintain the local businesses, or do they prefer to go to the nearby city?

One part of the community does. Even if they don't have this notion of helping to promote the financial activity, economic activity of the region, they continue buying in the locality. The other party migrates to the nearby town, which would basically be our competition. I think they are just looking for better prices or more options. They don't stop to think that they might be putting the businesses inside the community in risk, once they don't shop here.

32- Do you think the community the Barra Nova care about the future of the Mercantil Nazareno?

I think they do. I think that once they understand that that company is meeting their needs, I think they will hope for the continuation of the company.

33- What about the violence? Has the company ever suffered from local violence?

Yes, we have, a few times.

34- But have you been victims of people from the community or not?

No. It was people from outside.

35- Do you think the community protects small businesses in the issue of violence?

Yes! There is always communication. If there are weird people in the community, everybody starts to call each other, to make sure everything is ok.

36- How do you think that the community gives back to the support Mercantil Nazareno provides?

I think by buying the products sold by the company, right. By being good customers, by keeping the company going.

37- Do you consider Mercantil Nazareno successful?

I consider it successful, because seeing the whole life trajectory of the owner, of his work, and today seeing how the company is organized, and how it walks, I believe that he has succeeded.

38- What do you think motivated the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno to open his own business?

I believe it is for necessity. Entrepreneurship for necessity. He started very early, with his father. And then it went on and on, and he continued the activities. It was something he needed to survive, to make a living, to support his family.

39- What do you think the owner of Mercantil Nazareno uses as a measure for the success of the company?

I think that he looks back to his own life and seeing all that he has accomplished. I think he might look to the beginning and look at today, to where he is now, I think he can believe he has achieved success.

40- Do you, as an employee of the establishment, consider the growth of the community of Barra Nova linked to the success of the Mercantil Nazareno?

Yes, of course. Because come on... it's the question of always having a return. If there's income, if the money's running in the community, the business will fortify itself, and that's it... there will be job generation for community members, and people will return to the establishment, they will be new clients and so on.

41- Do you think that the success of a company can be linked to the social responsibilities that this company practice?

I think so. I think that many companies, large companies, make great media to publicize this kind of responsibility. Because from the moment they contribute to the environment or any other kind of social practice, if their clients know about it, in my head, they will already have a preference for this company. So, this company will be successful.

42- Do you think that a company that does not practice any kind of social responsibility can also be successful?

Yes, it can. It can be successful, but as I said, it depends on what you consider as success.

43- Do you think that a company would practice social responsibility even if it did not get any kind of return from the community?

If it was an obligation, yes. I believe that they would only do that if it were under pressure from the law. Nobody does anything without thinking on the return, financial or not.

44- Do you think the community of Barra Nova supports the small businesses that are inside the community?

Unfortunately, not. I think they don't even have this notion of helping the companies. Because if the people from the community could understand that it is a win-win relationship, from both sides, I think people would try to help. For example, in this moment of pandemic, the community have created a movement to buy from the small and such. But, unfortunately, there is no understanding in our community, and in small communities in general, I believe.

45- Do you think that because the community doesn't help/support the company so much, it kind of discourages the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno from offering more support and support?

Yes! I think that if we had a return, or even much more positive feedback, it would motivate the owner even more. Because I think that people not even recognize what we already do, you know. I think that the social responsibility, the actions promoted by the company, if they were recognized, if people understood that this exists, and if they recognized this, I'm sure they would bring a greater return.

I think the community don't give back, don't offer a better return because they don't know, or they are pretending they don't know the companies are expecting it.

## **Interview with Employee of Mercantil Nazareno – Participant 8**

1- Have you ever heard about business social responsibility?

Yes, you have.

2- What do you understand about this subject?

I believe that the social responsibility of a company is the actions practised by it that might cause some positive impact in the place it is located. Some impacts such as the reduction of inequality, actions aimed at sustainable development, these things.

3- You are an employee of the Mercantil Nazareno, correct?

Yes, I am.

4- Do you consider the Mercantil Nazareno important for the development of the community of Barra Nova?

I think so because it generates jobs. The people who work here are from the community, and the owner usually buys products from local farmers, from fruits and vegetables, to sell in the shop. He usually buys from local producers.

5- Who do you think should be responsible for the growth and development of local communities?

I think primarily that it is the public power, through the legislative and executive sectors. Then, the people in the community themselves should be active in the process of building and developing the community. And the local enterprises! They are also responsible for the development. In my opinion, the main ones are those.

6- What is your opinion about the following sentence: Improving the community is an exclusive obligation of the government!

No, it is not exclusive to the government. I consider the government to be the main responsible, but it is not exclusive to the government. So, the other segments I spoke about earlier are also responsible. The people in the community and the enterprises within

the community. The people that own the private properties in the community as well. In short, everyone.

7- Do you know if the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno has helped the community in any way?

He usually does. Usually, he helps in cultural events. Sometimes people come asking for contributions. Also, he helps when we have bigger problems here in the community, for example, he helps with road maintenance. This is the government responsibility, but sometimes, most of the times, they don't do their part. Some people get together to try to fix the roads and they come asking for help, like money, to pay for the service.

8- Do you know if the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno has helped families financially?

Yes, he has. However, he helps mostly with food baskets. That's usually the case.

9- Do you know if there has been any publicity of that help?

No, usually there is no disclosure by the company, nor by him. If there has been any publicity, it was from a third party who knew about the action or the promoter of the social event that announced the sponsors. Or even people from the community that heard of it and talked about it, but he does not advertise it!

10- Why do you think there is no advertisement for good contributions?

I think that for the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno, this question of advertising the responsibility of the company is not something so important. You see, he doesn't have a theoretical input on the subject, he doesn't see that it is something that will improve the company's image. I think he helps because of his principles. His principles, what he thinks is right. I think that's it. You know, he is a simple man.

11- Besides the food baskets, do you know if the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno has helped in any other way?

Yeah, he's very active in the community, by helping out. For example, with money. Usually, when someone needs medicine or something else, he helps, he contributes.

12- And you, as a Mercantil Nazareno employee, have you done any kind of volunteering or have you helped the community on behalf of the company?

No, I don't think I've done anything on behalf of the company. If I've done something, I must have done it at his request, but at the moment I don't have any memories.

13- Do you think a company can be successful without helping the community?

I don't think so. It can be successful financially, but it will fail in the social part, and for me, a successful company also has to contribute to the social.

14- In general, what do you think motivates entrepreneurs to help local communities?

In general, I think that the entrepreneurs who have more knowledge about the subject, they look for social responsibility activities to improve the image of the company, but I also think that the big part helps because of empathy, you know. Because they know they need to help the next one, and those things.

15- In the case of the Mercantil Nazareno, what do you think motivates the owner to help the local community?

I think what motivates him the most is to help his neighbours. I think it's something inherent to him. It's not so much the social responsibility of the company, but it's something more of himself. I don't think that he thinks much about the benefits the business might get when he helps, you know.

16- Do you think the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno helps the community because it's the right thing for him to do or because he feels pressured from the community to do it?

Because it's the right thing to do! I don't think he feels any kind of community pressure. The community is small and very simple.

17- Do you think that by helping the community, the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno realizes that he is also helping the company itself?

I think he might have some understanding of it. He must understand that if the community is doing well, the business is also doing well because businesses work like this. Also, his main audience is the people from his own community, you know. So, if the people from

the community are not doing well, there is not a good economy in the place, the business is not doing well either. I think he has that perception too. However, you know, he is not going to say that he helps the community just because it helps the business.

18- What's his school level?

I have a bachelor's degree.

19- Do you think a person's school level can influence the level of help they are willing to offer to the local community?

I don't think so. I believe that help is inherent in each person, regardless of their schooling. What could improve, in the case of Nazareno, the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno, if he had a higher level of schooling, he could have better theoretical input. He would have more information; he could even change the way he does business. He could advertise more, but not all of his actions. I think it wouldn't feel right for him to publicise everything.

20- How long have you lived in the community?

I have been living in the community for the last 21 years. Born and raised here.

21- Do you think that the time a person lives in the community can influence the level of help they are willing to offer?

Yes, because the longer a person lives in the community, especially a small community like ours, the more they get to know people's needs, the more you get to have close relationships with them, and they create empathy for the others. So, I think it does influence.

22- Do you know how long the Nazarene has lived in this community?

I think he has been living here for about 30 years.

23- Do you think that because of the time he has lived in the community, it has influenced the way he looks and cares for the community?

I think so, because he's more involved with the people, right? Because it wouldn't be the same if he has just moved into a new community with the company. He wouldn't have

the same level of involvement that he has with the people in our community. So, I think it does influence how he deals with the community.

24- Do you know if the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno has ties of friendship in the community?

He has some bonds of friendship, yes, with some people.

25- Do you think this friendship, this bond, increases his motivation to help people in the community?

I think that not necessarily, because the motivation to help comes from the knowledge that he has of the people, you know, but not necessarily of the relationship with the people in the community.

26- Do you know if most of the clients of the Mercantil Nazareno come from the community or the regions around?

Most of the clients he has come from the community. But he also has a good number of clients from the nearby communities. Those communities are very close to Barra Nova, our community.

27- Do you think that because the community is a client of the Mercantil Nazareno, this can influence the motivation to help these people?

Yes, I think it does. I think it does because since he has a good number of customers here, he thinks that help must be the right thing to do. Yes, I believe he thinks it's the right thing to do, to contribute to the community. So, yes, I think it can be a motivation.

28- Do you consider the people in the community as loyal customers of the Mercantil Nazareno?

The vast majority yes, I do. The vast majority of the community are loyal customers. They are always people that don't really care. They are just searching for the best prices.

29- Do you think people in the community care about the future of the enterprise?

I think they care, too. Because as I said before, the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno hires people from the own community and not people from outside. And in the case of



purchasing goods as well! The owner buys from people in the community. So, I believe that people do care, not just because it is convenient for them to buy from us, but because we also buy from them! It is a two-way road.

30- Do you believe that when the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno helps the community, the community also gives a return?

I believe so. The return would be the financial return. I think mainly the financial return. They return as clients.

31- Do you know if the company has ever suffered from local violence?

Yes, it has.

32- Do you know if it was people from the own community who robbed the company?

It was not people from the community. It was people from outside.

33- Do you think that the community protects the small businesses that are within the community?

I think that, in a certain way, it does. In the case of violence, they can, in a certain way, intimidate the action of the people who come from outside. People who come from outside will probably want to act in moments that the company is vulnerable when it does not have a level of supervision, or even when there is no movement on the street. I believe that if there is a threat from outside, the community residents might warn us. Yes, they end up warning us, telling us to be careful, those things.

34- What does a successful business mean to you?

A successful business would be one that manages to stay in the market, even in the face of crises. For example, I consider that all companies, that stay in the market after the COVID situation, as very successful. Also, I consider successful a company that cares about the environment where it is located. I think that it is of no use to be in the market, to offer products and services, and not engaged with social practices. For me, that would be basically it.

35- Do you consider the Mercantil Nazareno successful?

I think so. I think he is successful because he is already well established in the market. He has been in this type of business for a long time, and besides, he can give support to the community when is necessary.

36- What do you think motivated the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno to open his own business?

I think the necessity or the desire for better living conditions. Or the mix of both.

37- How do you think the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno measures the success of the business?

I think he measures success by the things he has accomplished, mainly. And by the business' achievements as well. Now he is able to buy a car or even another house. I think he might use those things as a measure of his success.

38- What do you think of the following phrase: The growth of the community can be seen as the growth of the companies within the community.

It depends. If the company has helped the growth of the community, I would agree with this sentence. But if the company is not engaged in helping to solve the social issues of the community, it makes no difference, because the growth of the business will not affect or be affected by the growth of the community.

39- Do you think that the success of a company can be connected to the social responsibilities that the company practices?

I think so. The success of a company, as I said before, is not only about financial success. If a company is in a place and it contributes to the growth of that place, it will contribute to the development of society, it will contribute to the improvement of people's lives, to the reduction of social inequality, those things. And all those things will contribute to a better environment in the place where the company is located. Everybody wins.

40- What do you think of a company that is considered successful by people in general, but has no social responsibility?

I think that most of the people consider a successful company only those companies that are financially successful. Usually, they don't focus if the company supports social causes or anything like that. I think that a lot of people have a small view, a limited view of what a successful company should look like. It might even demotivate companies, in general, to help, since people won't see it as something that important.

## **Interview with Employee of Mercantil Nazareno – Participant 9**

1- Have you ever heard of the term business Social Responsibility?

I've heard of it.

2- What do you understand by business social responsibility?

I think it is related to the promotion of actions that the company can do within the society where it is inserted. The place where the company is, more specifically. I can cite as an example, support to social causes, sports events.

3- Do you work in the Mercantil Nazareno, correct?

Yes, that is correct.

4- Do you consider the Mercantil Nazareno important for the development of the community of Barra Nova?

Yes, because we work in the commerce area and there is a bit of distance between the place where we work and the city centre. So, we have shortening in the distance of the products for the people who live around us.

5- Who do you think should be responsible for the development of the local communities?

I think the community itself, but so does the local government. The local government and the state government.

6- What do you think about the following sentence: Improving the community is an obligation exclusive to the government!

I partly agree. I think people who live in the community also have to have their share of the contribution, in some way. I think anyone can help, if they can to do so. If you can do it, I think it's important. A society is made with all the sectors that exist in it. The commerce, the service's part, the government part. So, I think that if you are taking

economic advantage of the people, of the place where you live, I think you have an obligation to help.

7- Do you know if the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno has helped the community in any way?

Yes. The owner always helps in events. Mostly cultural events. And he individually helps people too. We see that the company staff also help in the financial part, when someone is in need or when they need contributions for the church events, you know. We always see that kind of help.

8- Could you give more examples of this help?

Sometimes some community leaders make parties, make cultural events, like soccer tournaments, in the entertainment area even, focusing on the local culture, with local games. Usually, the Mercantil Nazareno is asked by some people to do the sponsorship and we always give financial help or help with some equipment, to help these activities.

9- Do you know if there has been an advertisement of those helps to society?

On the part of the company, no. I don't think the owner does that because of publicity. I think he provides this help more for the part that he is moved by the situation that the people are in. He is moved by his empathy. Since he's able to help, he does for him... it's like, his part, his contribution. Also, because people know that he has a little more conditions, so he gives help. Besides, he likes to help, but he does not use it as a marketing for the company, you know. But even so, I still think that other people advertise the help they receive, what comes back as marketing, but not forced by the company. The people of the events that he sponsors, they do the thanks and comments things like: This company helped with money, another person helped with donations, but on the part of marketing done by the place we work here, by the Mercantil Nazareno, we do not see him doing these actions just because the marketing will promote himself or something similar.

10- Have you, as an employee of the Mercantil Nazareno, helped the community in any way? With any volunteers?

Yes, I have. When we have an event here, it's usually necessary to transport materials. Then, I take my car and I help in the way I can for the event. And also, financially. I have contributed to many events here in the community, as an employee, but also as part of the community.

11- Do you think a company can be successful without helping the community?

It can, I think it can. I know that with help, naturally people observe when a company is there and is helping. Sometimes even without using the help for marketing. However, I see that many companies use the marketing of these actions to promote themselves.

I think that even without these promotions, depending on the type of company, if they are offering good products and services from the community, with quality and good prices, it can also be considered as a promotion of the company's responsibility. So, even without clear actions of social responsibility, like, food baskets, the company can still do a good job. I think it can be successful.

12- What do you think motivates businesspeople, in general, to help the communities?

Well, in general, it depends. Because we see a lot of people who help because they really want to, you know. Because they really have conditions, they have empathy, they even like to participate in these events, they like to help in social causes. But we also know that there is the marketing part. We know that a lot of people do a lot of social and environmental actions, but it's for promotion.

13- What do you think motivates the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno to help the local community?

I think it's more related to his empathy, you know. His own willingness to help. I think he also finds himself in the obligation of a person who can help. So why wouldn't he do that? Empathy for the other. He also enjoys being an important part of the events that happen in the region. I think that's more like it. I think it's more like his personal thing, you know.

14- Do you think the Nazareno helps the community because it's the right thing to do or because he suffers a community pressure?

I can say it's because he thinks it's the right thing to do. I don't think he suffers any pressure, to be honest. People always ask, alright? Whoever is inside the community, whoever works mainly with these cultural events, they always invite to participate and ask for sponsorship, but they always make it clear that the participation is not mandatory, but I think he really does it because he wants to. Because he thinks he should help the community he is part of.

15- Do you think the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno understands that by helping the community, he is also helping the company?

I think he does. Indirectly I think he knows that people can recognize the help he offers. So, I think, in my opinion, he doesn't do it out of recognition, but I believe he understands the benefits. He knows that helping, even though the company helps not to promote itself or to do some marketing, people will recognize it one day.

16- What is your school level?

I have a bachelor's degree.

17- Do you think that a person's school level can influence the way they see the community, helps the community?

Not necessarily. I don't think so. It's okay that when a person has a higher level of education, they can be more enlightened. And they may have that question of wanting to help because of that, because they're more enlightened, anyway. But I don't think that it necessarily influences, because I see a lot of people who don't have such a high level of education. Even the people who do the cultural events here in the region. They're not people with such a high level of schooling, like graduation, those things.

18- Do you know the school level of the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno?

Yes. He doesn't have the fundamental education complete. He didn't finish first grade, I think.

19- Do you think the school level of the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno influences how he helps the community?

I don't think so. In that case, no. He helps because he has the ability to help. I think he thinks he should help since he can help. And he wants to help people, too. But I don't think the schooling level has a direct influence. I'm trying to keep in mind how little schooling he has.

20- How long have you lived in the community of Barra Nova?

I was born and raised here, and for now, I'm still here. Until today I live here. I've lived here for 28 years.

21- Do you think that the time a person lives in the same community can influence the way they take care of the community?

Yes, it definitely can. Because there's a greater commitment. You're there. In everyday life. You see the construction of that community because over time things change. Things naturally change. Development is coming, people's conditions are improving, technological development is coming, at last. I think that when the person is inserted for a long time, they experienced all these aspects, so I think that influences. Because they know the local's reality as well. I think that a person who knows the local reality a lot, who lives with that reality, I think that he has more chances of helping more, of promoting actions of this type.

22- Do you know how long the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno lives in the community?

Yes. He's been living here for about 26 years, I think.

23- Do you think this connection with the community influences his involvement?

Yes! Directly. Of course.

24- What's your relationship with your boss?

It's a good relationship. We're very close.

25- Do you know if the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno has friends in the community?

Yes. Many people consider him as a friend because he's very accessible. He talks to everyone on a daily basis. He works directly with people. So, I think he has lots of friends.

26- Do you know if the customers of the Mercantil Nazareno are from the community or do they come from the surrounding region?

Look, I will estimate that 90% of the customers are from the community, but the business also serves other communities around.

27- Do you think that because the community is a client, and because he also has this connection of friendship with the people of the community, this influences how he helps the community?

Yes, it certainly does. Especially if he sees someone close to him, that he knows the reality. An example, talking about financial help for a person. So that influences, right. And when you also meet some people who are promoting the events and know that they are people of responsibility, he also trusts those people, so he helps through them.

28- Do you think people in the community are loyal customers of the company?

Yeah... I think we can consider them as loyal. Although today we have a lot of competition. There are other companies in the same segment within the community. A little further from the centre other companies make the competition very big too. However, what we realize is that those older clients are more loyal. Even if they have to use the trade or the service of other companies, but they are always here shopping, anyways. Let's say they don't abandon us. Since we are the company they usually buy from.

29- Do you think people in the community care about the future of the company?

I think they do. I think the people around us would miss it. Not just because we provide a business service, but because we are close and we have lots of options and good service. So, it's important to them that the business is open because it's easier, a lot closer, for people who want to get something in need, in urgency, you know.

30- How do you think the community could give a return to the company, since the company offers these social responsibility activities?

I believe that by giving preference to buy from the company. Not that this is mandatory. I see it this way, I, as a community resident, if there is one type of service that is offered here, in the community, and there is another community in another city that also offers the same type of service, I, as a community resident, prefer to do or buy it here, to help the local community itself.

So, I think that by doing that, people helping their own local community. By this way we can circulate the money here, helping the community itself. I use the things that we have within your own community. Not to mention it's closer.

31- Do you know if the company has ever suffered from local violence?



Yes, sometimes it has.

32- Do you know if it was people from the community who robbed the company?

So, we don't really have that information, but I don't think so. Usually, I think there are people from outside.

33- Do you think the community protects the small businesses that are inside the community?

Not necessarily. I think it's a pretty important thing to do, right? It's like I said... I, when I can, I always prefer things from the region. I think it's very important for the development, for the circulation of money, for the improvement of the economy in the area. But people don't necessarily think like that.

34- What does a successful business mean to you?

I think it's a business where they are offering a good, a service, a trade, and they are inserted in a place, and they are surviving from that activity that the business was created for, and they are financial return from it. Finally, the business is maintaining itself financially by offering the service or product.

35- Do you consider the Mercantil Nazareno successful?

Yes, I can consider it, because he already has around 26/27 years of activity, and we see that they have continuous activities, always bringing more options for the public. He also hires people formally and informally, which I think also helps a lot in this aspect, which I think also shows that he can be a successful company. So, I think it is a successful company.

36- What do you think motivated the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno to open his business?

Well, having talked to him a few times, he told me it was a matter of necessity. A need to have a job, a need to make money. He started it very small, not that today it is that big, a supermarket, but given what he started, today he is very comfortable financially. He has a stable business. So, I think the main motivation was to create a source of income for him.

37- Knowing the owner of the Mercantil Nazareno, what do you think he considers a success for his company?

I believe it's getting up every day, having customers for him to serving. For him, offering the products, serving everyone well can be considered as a success. And he is keeping himself, helping the people who need it. I think being able to help people who are in need financially is a way to measure success as well. Offering work too, the way he can offer it. That's my vision of what he sees as success.

38- What do you think of the following sentence: The development of companies within the community depends on the growth of the community!

I think that is a valid statement because if the community grows economically, socially, it will directly influence the companies that are within that community. People are buying, using the services of local companies.

39- When you look at the question of success, do you think success can be connected to the social responsibility actions of the company?

I don't necessarily see a connection. I think it can influence positively, of course, but I don't think it necessarily is linked to success. I don't think that just because the companies promote social actions I don't think it directly influences the issue of company success. It can help, like marketing, but I don't see any other link beyond that.

40- What do you think of companies that are considered, by people in general, as successful, but that do not have any kind of social activity?

I think that the community can have a negative view of this company over time, but not necessarily. But those who live in the community, who see that some company is not helping, who is not collaborating with anyone, I believe that it can be a bad view

41- In general, what do you think discourages a company from helping the local community?

I don't know... I think it might be just a personal matter on the owner. If he doesn't want to help and he does not believe in helping, he won't help. And I think the absence of a return from the community might be a way to demotivate them as well. Because I find it very difficult for a company to want to help if it doesn't have a financial return from the community, at least.

42- Concerning the Mercantil Nazareno, do you think he doesn't help anymore because of the absence in a bigger return?

No, I don't think it has any connection. I think he gets a good return from the community. I think a lot of people are kind and grateful to the relationship and for the help, but indirectly. However, I think a lot of people think like this: I'll buy it here because he's a nice guy. When I need him he's always available to help me. And not just financially.